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## CONTENTS

Editorial .....	201
Colbert Ferry <i>by Dawson A. Phelps</i> .....	203
The Bonapartists in Alabama <i>by Anne Bozeman Lyon</i> .....	227
The State Capitol in Montgomery <i>by Mathew P. Blue</i> .....	242
The White Basis System and The Decline of Alabama Whiggery <i>by Carlton Jackson</i> .....	246
A Great Day for the Whigs of Alabama <i>edited by Virginia K. Jones</i> .....	254
Alabama Opinion and the Whig Cuban Policy <i>by Durwood Long</i> .....	262
Colonel James M. Whitehead: Agrarian Editor of the Deep South <i>by William Warren Rogers</i> .....	280
1763—The Forgotten Bicentennial <i>by Robert R. Rea</i> .....	287
Some Interesting Accessions of the Department of Archives and History During the Fiscal Year 1962-63 <i>by Julia A. Perdue</i> .....	294
The History of Mount Sterling <i>by Euba Eugenia DuBose</i> .....	297





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EDITORIAL

The papers published in this issue conclude Volume 25.

Note an index to both Volumes 24 and 25 has been provided.

No Confederate material has been included in this issue.—P.A.B.



## COLBERT FERRY

and

Selected Documents

by

Dawson A. Phelps, Historian

Natchez Trace Parkway

## COLBERT FERRY

That part of the Tennessee River from the mouth of Bear Creek to Muscle Shoals was one of the most strategic locations in the Old Southwest. After the American Revolution, both Spain and the United States sought to secure control of this vital spot. Hosts of ambitious promoters dreamed of and schemed for the establishment of a settlement there. In 1787, the Government of the United States made its first treaty with the southern Indians. The boundaries of the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw tribes were drawn—at least on a map—and to the United States was reserved the right to establish a fort on a tract of land “5 miles in diameter” at the mouth of Bear Creek.<sup>1</sup>

Three years later, Secretary of War Henry Knox ordered a small expedition under Major John Doughty to proceed from Fort Harmar, via the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers, to the mouth of Bear Creek. Doughty’s immediate aim, it seems, was to determine the suitability of the site for a fort and also to establish contact with the Chickasaw Indians. He failed to carry out his mission. He arrived at his destination on March 22, 1790, and was immediately attacked by a party of Creek and Cherokee Indians. “During this unhappy affair,” he reported, “I had the

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<sup>1</sup>Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, 3 vols. (Washington, 1892-1913), II, 8-16.

Misfortune, out of 15 Privates, to have five Killed & six Wounded.”<sup>2</sup>

For this tragedy, James Wilkinson, a veteran of the Revolution whose name is intimately connected with the Natchez Trace, probably was responsible. He was then a Kentucky planter, politician, and paid agent of Spain and warned Esteban Rodriguez Miro, the Spanish Governor of Louisiana, of what was afoot:

Since I wrote you on the 1st instant I have been laboring to discover Major Doughty's intention, and I have the strongest reason to think he will go to Cumberland to Nashville, and from there to the Chickasaws by land, this is opening a most dangerous communication, and it should be destroyed in the bud, cannot you immediately apprise McGillivray of this operation, and direct him to cut off Major Doughty.<sup>3</sup>

Whether Miro got word to McGillivray, a renowned Creek chief, in time for the latter to order action against Doughty we do not know, but it appears that he did.

Spain also had designs on this spot. Late in 1793, Baron Carondelet, then Governor General of Louisiana, proposed to his government the “re-establishment” of forts at spots formerly occupied by the French, namely Tombeckbe and Muscle Shoals. (Here the Governor erred. France never had a fort at Muscle Shoals.) By this action, Spain would

. . . dominate both banks of the Mississippi as far as the Ohio, forever separating the Americans from it, the

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<sup>2</sup>Colton Storm, ed., “Up the Tennessee in 1790: The Report of Major John Doughty to the Secretary of War,” **East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications**, (cited hereafter as **ETHSP**), XVII, 119-132.

<sup>3</sup>Wilkinson to Miro, February 5, 1790, translated and edited by D. C. and Roberta Corbitt, “Papers from the Spanish Archives Relating to Tennessee and the Old Southwest, 1783-1800,” **ETHSP**, XXII, 141.

navigation and passage of which is the whole object of their settlements in the West.<sup>4</sup>

However, nothing came of this proposal. Two years later, Spain formally surrendered her claim to the region, and in 1798 withdrew her troops from all garrisons north of the 31st parallel.

The United States in 1801 sought and secured from the Chickasaw Indians

. . . the right to lay out and open a road through their land between the settlements of Mero district in Tennessee, and those of Natchez Mississippi provided that the necessary ferries over the stream crossed by said road shall be the property of the Chickasaw Nation.<sup>5</sup>

The same James Wilkinson who 11 years earlier had sought to prevent American penetration into the region south of Tennessee, was the chief American spokesman. He had re-entered the army in 1791 and soon thereafter had become the commander of all American troops in the Old Southwest.

George Colbert was the chief negotiator for the Indians and possibly had an eye to his own interest when he had the reservation concerning ferries inserted into the treaty. Some two or three years earlier he had established ferryboat service across the Tennessee River at the mouth of Bear Creek to accommodate the growing volume of traffic which was moving from Nashville to Natchez.<sup>6</sup> At Colbert's suggestion a site about 20 miles upstream was selected as the place where the Trace

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<sup>4</sup>Carondelet to Las Casas, November 20, 1792, in Lawrence Kinnard, ed., **Annual Report of the American Historical Association: Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794**, 4 vols. (Washington, 1945), IV, pt. 3, 96.

<sup>5</sup>Commissioners to Secretary of War, October 27, 1801, in Kappler, *op. cit.*, II, 55.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.* See also, James Hall, "History of Mississippi Territory," **Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society**, IX, 541.

would cross the Tennessee River.<sup>7</sup> Also, it is probable that he aided the surveyors who laid out the route for the new road.

For these services, and possibly others, Wilkinson agreed to erect

Cabins for him, at such place as he may fix on, cabins for his own accommodations and that of travelers—to include a kitchen and small store house and stables, and be pleased to put up a strong pen. Those buildings are not to cost more than the mens labor . . .<sup>8</sup>

There was a further stipulation that the army would build a new ferryboat to replace one “worn out in the public service.”

Colbert, one of those obscure figures who hovered on the fringe of the American scene, is usually remembered as an innkeeper and ferryboat operator.<sup>9</sup> A study of the scraps of information concerning him reveals that he was one of the two or three men who guided the destiny of the Chickasaws during a critical period in their history. How did he rise to become a leader of his people? We do not know. Perhaps he learned from his father, who was an eminently successful trader. Possibly it was his ability to acquire and retain wealth. Perhaps it was his ability to adapt himself to new circumstances and conditions. Concerning him, Benjamin Hawkins, the General Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the South, observed:

These people [the Chickasaw] are settling out from their old towns and fencing their farms. They have within two years fenced nearly 150, and all of the farmers have a stock of cattle or hogs. The men begin to attend seriously

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<sup>7</sup>American State Papers, Indian Affairs, 2 vols. (Washington, 1832-1834), I, 653.

<sup>8</sup>James Wilkinson to Lieutenant Campbell, December 27, 1802. Ms. Records of the War Department. Office of the Secretary of War, Letters Received. National Archives.

<sup>9</sup>Guy B. Braden, “The Colberts and the Chickasaw Nation,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XVII, 229-231.

to labor. Major George Colbert who ranks high in the government of his nation and was the speaker at the treaty with us has labored during the past summer at the plan at the plough and with the hoe. This example has stimulated others.<sup>10</sup>

About the year 1800, the Chickasaw made an important change in their government, of which Hawkins wrote:

Here after several years of effort we have prevailed on the chiefs to appoint a head to transact their business. They now have a Mingco who is the Chief of their nation and deliberative council.<sup>11</sup>

Under this arrangement, an obscure tribal chief, Chinnube, became the "Great Chief," "Mingco," or "king." It perhaps is not inaccurate to say that under this scheme George Colbert became the prime minister and remained so until the mid-1820's. Government officials who dealt with Chickasaw affairs during this period showed great respect for his opinions and frequently sought his support for their projects.

The ink was hardly dry on the Chickasaw treaty of 1801, which did not include a land cession, before the United States Government began a campaign to acquire parts of, and eventually all, the Chickasaw lands. The Indians resisted but were induced to surrender large parts of their domain in 1805, 1816, and 1818. Finally, in 1832, they acceded to the inevitable, sold their remaining lands, and agreed to move west.

In these negotiations, George and other members of the Colbert clan had important, often decisive, roles. How important is disclosed by the action of the U. S. Commissioners in paying considerable sums of money to them and other influential Chickasaw tribesmen. In 1805, the sum of \$1,000 each was paid George Colbert and Okoi "for services rendered to their

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<sup>10</sup>Benjamin Hawkins to R. J. Meigs, October 26, 1801. Ms. Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*



nation." By 1816, the price had gone up. Cash in the amount of \$4,500 was paid to George and his brother, Levi, but this fact was not mentioned in the published text of the treaty lest the recipients be killed by angry tribesmen. To the former was allotted about 16 sections of land, including the ferry landing, on the north side of the Tennessee River. Since this grant was publicly made as one of the provisions of the treaty, it appears likely that it was to Colbert as a trustee of the Nation, not for his personal benefit.<sup>12</sup> A new treaty was concluded in 1818. This time the secret minutes of the negotiations show that George and Levi Colbert received a "docour," of \$4,500 each, while James Colbert received \$1,666.<sup>13</sup>

Following this event, and probably as a consequence, the tribal council decreed that henceforth no individual would be permitted to receive grants of land or other property from either the United States or any third party. This action seems to indicate that their compatriots suspected the Colberts of doubledealing. If so, it seems not to have destroyed their standing. George and Levi continued to represent their Nation, both in the unsuccessful negotiations of 1825 and 1830 and in the successful negotiations of 1832 and 1834.

During the time that George Colbert was pursuing a public career, he did not neglect his personal affairs as a ferry operator and farmer. How profitable was the ferry operation? It is difficult to say. Colbert complained in 1806 that, because of high operating costs and the seasonal nature of his business, a reasonable profit had not been realized. The truth of the matter is that on three occasions only were the profits large—that is, Colonel Daugherty's expedition of 1803 to Natchez, Jackson's expedition to Natchez in 1812-13, and the return of the veterans of the Battle of New Orleans to Nashville in 1815.

Colbert himself explained that the greatest volume of

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<sup>12</sup>R. S. Cotterill, **The Southern Indians**, (Norman, Okla., 1954), 132-133, 148-149, 199-201.

<sup>13</sup>Samuel C. Williams, **Beginnings of West Tennessee in the Land of the Chickasaws**, (Johnson City, Tenn., 1930), appendices A and B.



business was supplied by the "Kaintucks." Many could not pay, and he carried them free-of-charge and sometimes gave them food as well. Post riders paid only half-fare, and Indians, of whom there were many, paid nothing.<sup>14</sup> The Trace, unlike the old National Road or the Oregon Trail, never became an immigrant trail nor did it ever, like the Santa Fe Trail, carry any appreciable amount of freight. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the ferry never became a highly profitable business.

R. J. Meigs, the Postmaster General, on November 20, 1817, permitted rerouting of the Great Mail:

Until further advised you can agreeable to your letter of the 26th ult. pass the public Ferry on the Tennessee instead of Colberts Ferry.<sup>15</sup>

Two years later the route of the Great Mail was further changed when the Postmaster General directed that it run directly from Nashville to the newly established Florence, Alabama.<sup>16</sup> Thereby a milepost in the history of the Trace had been reached. All that part of it which runs through Tennessee had been abandoned as the post road over which the Great Mail passed.

These actions probably did not end Colbert's ferry operation, but were symptomatic of changes which were taking place along the Trace. Overland travel from Natchez northward was giving away to travel by steamer.<sup>17</sup> Gaines Trace, opened in

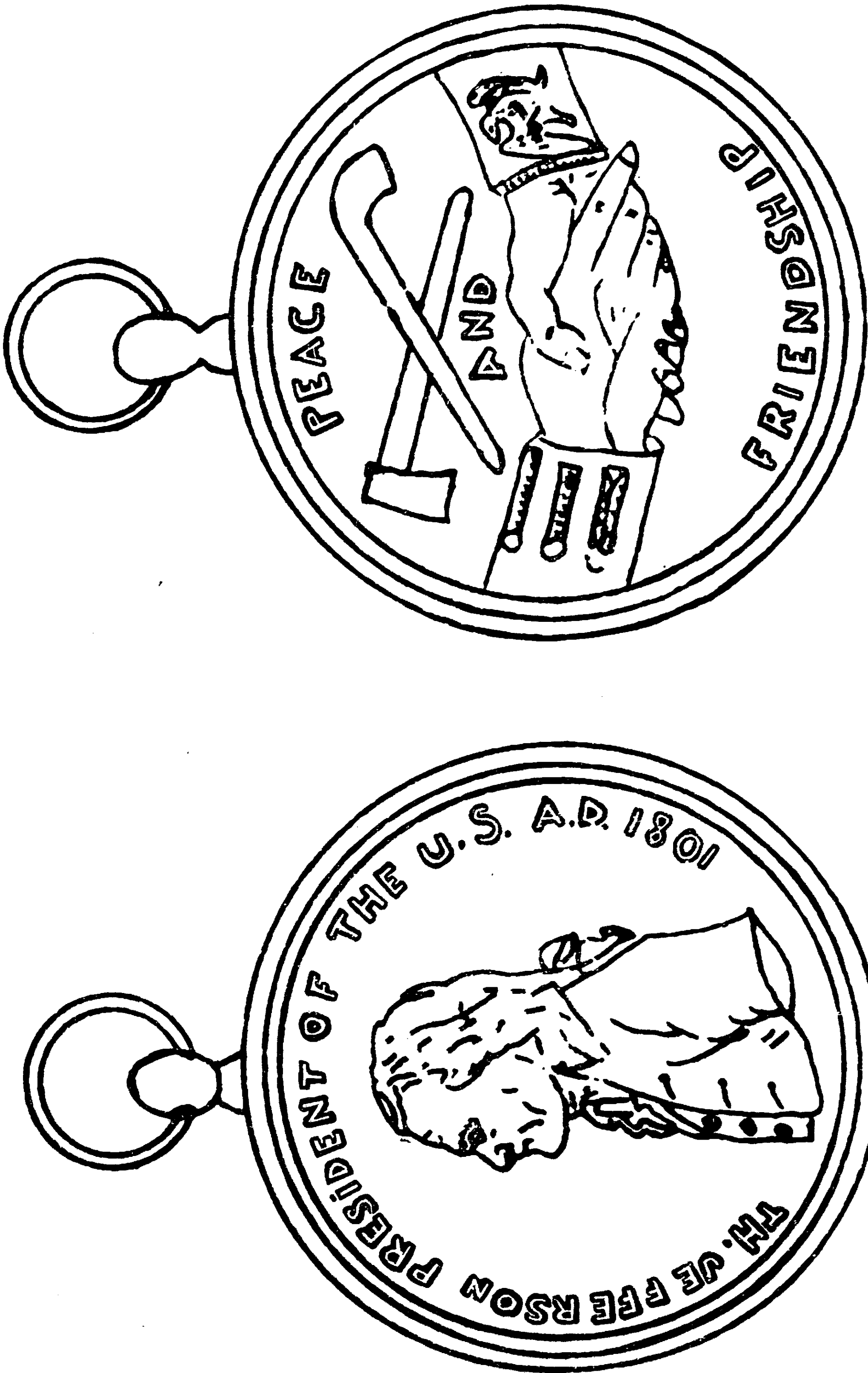
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<sup>14</sup>George and Levi Colbert to Ames Robertson and R. J. Meigs, June 23, 1806. (See appendix.)

<sup>15</sup>Letterbooks of the Postmaster General, Ms., National Archives, (cited hereafter as Letterbooks), Vol. U, 432. The above mentioned "public Ferry" probably was located at Miltons Bluff, near the mouth of Caney Creek, 2 or 3 miles north of Barton, Ala., the northern terminus of Gaines Trace. George J. Leftwich, "Cotton Gin Port and Gaines Trace," **Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society**, VII, 263-270.

<sup>16</sup>R. J. Meigs to John Donly, March 21, 1819, Letterbooks, vol. U, 456.

<sup>17</sup>In 1821, 61 steamboats were operating on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. **Mississippi State Gazette**, March 19, 1821.



COLBERT MEDAL  
Presented by Thomas Jefferson to George Colbert 1801.

1817, also diverted traffic from the Natchez Trace. These factors must have induced Colbert to close his business and move to a plantation near Tupelo, where he was living in 1820.<sup>18</sup> In such a fashion ended one important aspect of Natchez Trace history. Its memory lingered on. Until 1865 the name Colbert Ferry continued in use as a place name.<sup>19</sup>

During the next 20 years, 1820-1840, there was insufficient business to justify keeping a ferry on the Tennessee River to connect the western parts of Franklin and Lauderdale Counties. The Chickasaws continued to own the area west of Caney Creek until 1830, and did not vacate it until 1837. Thereafter, this area was rapidly settled, creating a situation in which there was considerable local travel between the western parts of Franklin and Lauderdale Counties.<sup>20</sup>

There is strong local tradition, supported by some evidence, that a ferry for local use was reestablished sometime after 1840, and continued in use until 1861.<sup>21</sup> Active military operations along the lower and middle Tennessee began early in 1862 and continued until the end of the war. These, and the hard times which followed, ended all ferry operations.

After the Civil War, the name Colbert Ferry was replaced by Georgetown, or George Town. Why? Local tradition is silent, as are written records. Can it be that in folk memory a part of the name George Colbert has been preserved in the new name?<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Harry Warren, "Some Chickasaw Chiefs and Prominent Men," *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, VIII, 555-570.

<sup>19</sup>Latourette, Map of Alabama, 1846. *War of the Rebellion, Atlas*, Map of Alabama, ca. 1865.

<sup>20</sup>Thomas Perkins Abernethy, *The Frontier Period in Alabama*, (Montgomery, Ala., 1922), 21-38.

<sup>21</sup>Lauderdale County Road Book, 1840-1860, Ms. That the county maintained the "Old Natchez Trace" from the Tennessee River northward to the State line seems to indicate that a ferry was in existence during these years.

<sup>22</sup>Colbert County, Commissioners Court Proceedings, Ms., August 24, 1870.

There seems to have been considerable economic recovery in the late 1870's, a situation which made it profitable to resume ferry service. This situation led to the reestablishment of a ferry at George Town in April 1877.<sup>23</sup> The operator, Leander F. Hyatt, apparently found the operation unprofitable, and in less than two years asked and received authority to terminate his business.<sup>24</sup>

George Colbert is reputed to have been the richest man in the Chickasaw Nation. An obscure Mexican revolutionary, Gutierrez de Lara,<sup>25</sup> was impressed by a home located in the deep wilderness which looked "like a country palace with its abundance of glass in doors and windows." Possibly Gutierrez was only comparing Colbert's house with the average frontier dwelling. More convincing testimony about Colbert's wealth comes from the field notes of the original survey of this section. The surveyor estimated that George Colbert's improvement included "about 350 acres." An itinerant preacher noted in 1807 that "he and his brother had a large farm and about forty negros working for him."<sup>26</sup>

From contemporaries who came in contact with George Colbert we get some impression of his character and appearance. To a Methodist preacher he was a "very shrewd, talented man, and withal very wicked. He had two wives." To Dr. Rush Nutt, a Natchez planter, explorer, and member of the American Philosophical Society, he was the "greatest of the Chickasaws, displays genius and talent, . . . but is an artful designing man." R. J. Meigs thought him to be "extremely mercenary, miscalculates his importance, & when not awed by the presence of the officers of Government takes upon himself great airs."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, April 11, 1877. (See appendix.)

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, February 24, 1879. (See appendix.)

<sup>25</sup>"Diary of Jose Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara, 1811-1812," translated by Elizabeth Howard West, *American Historical Review*, XXXIV, 63.

<sup>26</sup>Jacob Young, *Autobiography of a Pioneer*, (Cincinnati, 1859), 215.

<sup>27</sup>*Natchez Trace Parkway Survey*, Senate Document No. 148, 76th Congress, (1941), 215.

His appearance to the missionary H. B. Cushman was that of a "tall handsome man." An elderly resident of Florence, Alabama, remembered Colbert as

...tall, slender and handsome with straight black hair that he wore long which came well down to his shoulders. His features were that of an Indian but his skin was lighter than that of his tribe.<sup>28</sup>

A conspicuous landmark associated with the site was the house erected in 1801ff which burned in 1929. As heretofore noted, the Government of the United States, through General Wilkinson, agreed "that a house of accommodation be put up for the use of George Colbert." Of this structure, Colbert commented in 1806 that:

You will Brothers judge of the value of the buildings which were but partly built by the soldiers. They erected only the outside as you see and only laid some oak boards for the floor of the largest building. I was at the expense of laying the floor, casing the windows, making the doors, finding the hinges and all the nails that were used—the roof of the house was only made with split clapboards, laid on & kept in place by poles, the chimney was begun with stone and only carried up with stone to the mantle piece, the remainder was made with wood & mud such as temporary cabbins done with by the first settlers in the woods.<sup>29</sup>

Shortly after the above was written, R. J. Meigs, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and James Robertson, the Chickasaw Agent, inspected Colbert's property and operations. Concerning the house, they reported

Colbert has lately built a small house of two stories, only 20 feet by 16 feet it is covered with rough clapboards,

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<sup>28</sup>Braden, *op. cit.*, 229.

<sup>29</sup>Letter cited in Note 15.

well shingled & sealed inside with pine Boards. this house he declares cost him 650 dollars.<sup>80</sup>

That the Superintendent and Agent said "lately built" does not conflict with Colbert's statement that he completed a structure which the soldiers had started.

The late Frank King, probably after a personal inspection, about 1923 described the house which he identified as having been built by George Colbert:

The house is built of the best material and fastened together with wooden pins. The two front rooms are [one?] above the other, are twenty four feet by eighteen with a nine foot ceiling. The back room is the same size. The foundation is of stone and the front porch is held up by black walnut well dressed columns about seven or eight inches square with the corners nicely beveled. The stone chimney is the most attractive feature of the place since it is ten feet broad at the base and maintained a width of eight feet or more [from] the ground, where it tapers to about six. It was plastered with cement . . .<sup>81</sup>

This must be the same edifice inspected by Robertson and Meigs in 1806. The discrepancy in dimensions need not be taken too seriously, since it is unlikely that a tape measure was employed in either case. Unless a man needs exact measurements, he is likely to pace off distances and report the result as fact rather than as an estimate.

Since the porch, chimney extension, and back room were not mentioned in the 1806 description, it is likely that these

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<sup>80</sup>R. J. Meigs and James Robertson to the Secretary of War, June 30, 1806. (See appendix.)

<sup>81</sup>F. R. King, draft of a talk made to the Daughters of the American Revolution, Iuka, Mississippi. King Papers. This description is very similar to that of C. B. Dowdy, who occupied the house in 1929 before it burned, to representatives of the National Park Service. Ms. O. T. Hagen and L. N. Anderson to V. F. Chatelain, August 31, 1933. Natchez Trace Parkway files.





COLBERT'S HOUSE

(built 1790)

This photograph was made in 1911.

features were added at a later time. The chimney withstood the previously mentioned fire, and for many years served a tenant house, which, in turn, was consumed by fire. The chimney then collapsed, and after a few years the stones were buried in a nearby erosion.

A shallow swale, evidently an approach road, runs from the house site eastward for perhaps 200 yards and there intersects another swale running north. The latter soon becomes deeply eroded and descends rapidly to the water's edge of Tennessee Valley Authority's Pickwick Lake near the ferry landing. To the south, all road evidence has been obliterated by the plow.

As it has for ages, the Tennessee River dominates the landscape at Colbert Ferry, and its history.

Throughout colonial times and all of pioneer history, the Indian held the banks of the river at strategic points... The imperial rivalries of Great Britain, France, and Spain made the Tennessee Valley a center of international and tribal intrigue, the scene of wars and ambushes, the goal of the land speculators and utopian dreamers. For half a century the Indian wars reddened its banks and filled its forests with the smoke of burning towns. The States came into being. The Tennessee gave its name to the state . . . <sup>32</sup>

The Tennessee, for reasons set forth at length by a man who knows and loves the historic river, did not achieve the importance as a transportation artery pioneer Americans had hoped for. It really was a series of "long pools, slanting and winding down the slopes of its mountain valleys." The pools themselves were navigable, but shoals at either end made navigation difficult. Near Colbert Ferry were Colbert Shoals, Bee Tree Shoals, Little Muscle Shoals, Big Muscle Shoals, and Elk River Shoals. They rendered nearly 50 miles of the river between the mouth of Bear Creek and Elk River all but useless for navigation.

Despite prevailing constitutional theory of the Jacksonian

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<sup>32</sup>Donald Davidson, **The Tennessee**, 2 vols., (New York, 1946), I, 16.



era, ways were found to make Federal money available to dig canals or find other means to try to make the Tennessee navigable. All failed. Only with the coming of the Tennessee Valley Authority in the twentieth century did the dream of a great and useful waterway materialize.

Donald Davidson has provided a vivid picture of the site today:

Great water birds flap up from the timbered banks—blue herons they must be, though the rivermen call them cranes. Wild roses bloom profusely, flinging their sprays right above the water... The lake is an iridescent blue-green. All around as it widens, we see island spits left from the old banks covered with a fresh green of young sprouts, and on the south side as we come near it, the sloughs and deepened creek mouths characteristic of a great reservoir area. As we approach the deep part of the Pickwick Lake in the cool of the evening, all is wild, lonely and deserted. Narrow arms of deep water enter the low wooded ridges. Colbert Shoals and old troubles lie fathoms deep, and where the Colberts used to ferry pioneer travelers on the Natchez Trace, all is a miles-wide expanse of calm lake-water. A government signal light marks the point where the Colbert Shoals Lock used to be.<sup>33</sup>

Three aspects of the Natchez Trace story converge at Colbert Ferry to give it significance and meaning: the site was strategically important in the rivalry between Spain and the United States for control of the lower Mississippi Valley; it was a key point in a frontier route of travel; and it was an outpost of the Chickasaw Nation during a critical phase of its history.

Both Spain and the United States recognized the possibilities inherent in the site. Each at least contemplated doing something. Spain lacked the power to do anything. Except for a weak effort in 1790, the United States waited. Eventually,

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<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, II, 349.

the surge of westward moving pioneers settled once and for all that it was to be American. Soon thereafter, with the establishment of ferry service, the Tennessee ceased to be a formidable obstacle to travel.

George Colbert was the founder of the ferry and, in a real sense, a symbol of the transformation experienced by the Chickasaw people during his lifetime. At the time of his birth in 1764, his people were still living in the stone age. By the time of his death, they not only had abandoned the most characteristic features of primitive society, but the entire Nation had moved a distance of more than 500 miles to the westward.

In this transformation, Colbert had an important part. He himself, half-Scot that he was, was an example of the new blood transfused into his Nation which had so vitalizing an influence. By his example, he encouraged his people to abandon the traditional primitive village life and settle on individual farms. He knew how necessary it was that his people become educated, so he supported the missionary schools, one of which was located less than 10 miles from his home. His own son was educated in the American fashion and later became a distinguished tribal leader, and in a real sense carried on the work of his father.

## APPENDIX

## Selected Documents

George and Levi Colbert to James Robertson and Return J. Meigs, 23rd June 1806. Ms. Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives. Brothers.

The Secretary of War has sent you here to see my establishment at the Ferry, the better to enable you to Judge what regulations ought to be established for the future; also to determine a matter between the United States & me respecting a charge for ferriage of the house-boats & Tennessee Militia on their way to Natchez in 1801. When I made the account for ferriage it was such as I conceived to be right, & at the same rate as I had charged every person for the same Service—I am sensible that the price of my ferriage is high when compared with that of Ferriage in the Settled Country. But in my situation several things ought to have some weight with you in determining on the propriety of my charges. In the first place I made this establishment in compliance with the wishes of the United States—(in the present extension of the Western Country, especially since the acquisition of Louisiana it is becoming of importance.) In the second place notwithstanding the aid promised me by Genl. Wilkins [sic] & Col. Hawkins in 1801 my beginning here has been very expensive to me. In the 3rd place the Ferry is very wide being 1364 yards, as measured by Lt. James. In crossing which we are obliged first to ascend the River from a quarter to half a mile, in order to prevent our being carried by the Current below the place of landing. I am obliged to have my boats attended with from three to five hands: the wages & subsistence of these hands is very expensive to me. I make a point of having the ferry well attended. particular care is always taken to expedite the Mail Carrier for the United States, & to whom I only charge half price. Myself and my Brother who is interested with me in this establishment have on all occasions made it a point to forward the views of the United States. When the militia were on their way to Natchez, my Brother Levi went considerable distance with them. furnished them with provisions with his

own money, without making any profit to the establishment. We did this because we wished success to the measures of the United States. Our nation has a long time been in close friendship with the United States & as an Individual I am one of these faithfull friends warmed by my personal service in Indian War. I hope that it is not improper to mention these things, for altho, you know them they are not known to many of the travellers who pass on this road—On the whole my expectations have not been realized by making this settlement, the travel is principally Boats to N. Orleans where the crews are discharged, who then return home by this road. many of whom are sick, & distitute of money, in such cases I alway give them provisions & carry them over the river ferriage free—no man going away from my house hungry. The trade to Orleans by Boats down the Ohio & the other rivers is performed early in the spring. the men return in May June & July. after which the traveling is very trifling. by no means enough to maintain my hands. When all these things are considered it will be easily seen that the ferry cannot be maintained at the usual price of ferriage in a Settled Country. I know that in time, the establishment here will be a valuable one: but untill that time arrives we must live at great expense without realizing our first expectations. In 1801 General Wilkinson & Colonel Hawkins the U. S. Commissioners promised to have a house built for me to enable me to entertain travellers. It is true they did not fix the value of the House: but from the design of the house I expect it to be such a one as would be decent & commodious for the entertainment of the Citizens of the U. States who travel on the road. Say, a house worth \$500 or \$600 in a Country where labour & every article except timber is very scarce & very dear. You will Brother, Judge of the value of the building which were but partly built by the Soldiers, they erected only the outside as you see only sawed some oak boards for the floor of the largest building. I was at the expense of laying the floor, casing the windows, making the doors, finding the hinges, & all the nails that were used—the roof of the house was only made with split clapboards, laid on & kept in their place by poles; the Chimney was begun with stone, & only carried up with stone to the Mantle piece, the remainder was made with wood & mud; such as temporary Cabbins Done with by the first Settlers in the woods. for my

part I cannot conceive that such buildings would be considered by the U. States such as they intended for my encouragement to fix myself here. I had forgot to mention that the soldiers built a ferry boat for me but not untill they had worn out my boat in the public service, the boat they built was made of green timber & in that season of the year that it rotted & was worn out within one year from the time it was made: so that I have not yet received any boat from the U. States, because my boat was worth as much as the one they built for me, of course I have a claim for a Boat as promised by the said Commissioners in 1801.

The United States could not foresee that this place since the opening of the road was to be a place of great resort for Indians of different nations in this Western Country, they demand ferriage for themselves across the river, & Custom has established that Indians never pay ferriage—this has been done by compact in their favor at all the ferries thro the Indian Countries except this, & altho there has been no stipulation in their favor in this place it cannot be got over with respect to Indians; not in a Single instance & liberties they take with my corn fields cannot be restrained by which I am a considerable sufferer.

I am confident the foregoing Statement is just: but as before mentioned, I am looking forward to a time I hope not far distant, when the place will become more productive, & I always intended, then, to lower the prices of ferriage so as to give Satisfaction to both Public & to individuals, & shall do it—I request you to State to the Secretary of War the Substance of my letter, indeed it ought to be all stated to him: because I wish to have his approbation in every thing in which the public is interested here. I am glad that the Secretary has sent you here: because you could not be more acquainted any other way with the true circumstances of this establishment.

I am willing to have deducted from my account which remains unsettled & is in the hands of the Secretary of War the Sum of 100 Dollars in which my Brother is equally interested & I wish you to assure him that I respect him for the care he has taken to have this matter settled by referring it



to his & my friends, & that I hope by my conduct to merit his esteem & that of all the friends of the United States to whom myself & my nation is strongly attached in friendship.

	Marks	
	X	
Geoerge		Colbert
	X	
Levi		Colbert

Colberts Ferry  
24th June 1806

Return J. Meigs and James Robertson to the Secretary of War, June 30, 1806. Records of the Office of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, National Archives.

Sir

Having received your letters of the 27th February & of the 15th of May last, the first relative to an account of George Colbert for ferriage of the Tennessee Militia on their route to Natchez in 1803-4, to the rates of ferriage to be taken in future at Colberts Ferry & Duck River & the value of Buildings promised by General Wilkinson to Colbert in 1801 &c. The second relating to the failure of an appropriation to carry into effect a treaty made with the Chickasaws in July 1805.

In the first letters you advised that some convenient time should be taken when it might be attended with small expense on this account we had waited for such an opportunity & should have waited longer had we not have been informed that from the Chickasaws not knowing the cause of the failure of the appropriation they had become very uneasy & disturbed in their minds fearing the Country would be taken possession of by the white people & that the appropriation would never be made as they had right to expect, that they should lose the land &c &c—. On this account it was thought best that no time should be lost to remove this uneasiness by explaining to them as you directed the cause of the delay (of the appropriation) & at the same time to do the business with G. Colbert which was referred to us by your first letter. We have just returned

from Colberts ferry where we had notified some of their principal men to meet us. We now find that had we not have gone to the place where Colbert lives we should have been ignorant of the true State of his establishment there—We took much pains to get the best information from him & others. & then requested him to State to us thro an Interpreter every thing relative to the ferry in which himself or the publick was interested—this was done with care. from which Statement & from our own knowledge & obseervations made at the place we have been guided in our opinion on that part of the business. & at his request we transmit a copy of his Statement for your Satisfaction. on seeing the Skeletons of buildings erected by the soldiers we were compelled to believe that they were by no means such as those promised or intended to encourage his Settlement at the place, the two buildings cannot be thought worth more than a rough Kitchen & Small Stable. Colbert has lately built a small House of two stories only 20 feet by 16 feet, it is covered with rough Clapboards, well Shingled & Sealed inside with pine Boards, this House he declares cost him 650 dollars. We are of opinion that from the engagements of the publick to him thro these Commissioners at that time (1801.) Colonel Hawkins & General Wilkinson that he ought to be allowed Five hundred & fifty dollars for his just expectations for buildings & fifty dollars for a good & large Ferry Boat in which the public may be much interested. The ferry is very wide, the water deep, & much exposed to winds from the flatness of the Country. A great part of the misserable Barracks in which the soldiers lived are burnt up, what remain are of the worst kind of huts built with small poles & are tumbling into ruins & he makes no use of them. With respect to the ferry in itself considered. at present it is of very little value, owing to the smallness of Custom at it and the great expense for hands: this cannot be avoided on account of its width & other circumstances mentioned, & from the best information we could obtain we have no reason to doubt the facts Stated by him to us We are of opinion that the ferry is well attended & that Colbert as he has Stated is very generous to people in distress who pass on that road & they are not few. He is fond of his interest & at the same time he is strongly attached to the Interest of the United States With respect to the delay or postponement of the appropriation, it

appeared that they had been much concerned: but when we explained to them the nature of that business & the cause why it was not done the last Session of Congress they appeared to be much relieved in their minds, Said they were Satisfied & desired us to return you their thanks for the care you had taken to Satisfy them on that head.

We wrote a letter to the Mingo their headman, and sent it to him by the Chickasaw merchants who met us at Colberts ferry.—these persons have addressed a few lines to you which they requested us to forward. their object is to obtain Interest on the money which they expected to receive. We told them that on this head we were not authorised to say anything: but would forward their address to you. Copies of both these papers we now transmit.

With respect to the future rates of ferriage Colbert says it cannot be altered generally without his loseing much of his expence for hands &c. that he will at all times carry the mail carrier, over the ferry at half price because that custom is compact & that in case troops of the U. States have occasion to pass the ferry, he will on being notified by you or some proper authority have them carried over the ferry also at half price.—& that he expects that it will not be long before he shall be able to lower the price of ferriage to the satisfaction of the Public & to Individuals.

We are of opinion that the sum of 100 \$ be deducted from the money which Colberts still claims from the United States for the ferriage of the Tennessee volunteers in 1803-4.  
Sec of War

Robertson  
Meigs

Colbert County, Commissioners Court Proceedings, April 11, 1877.

This day came into open court Leander F. Hyatt and makes application to the court to grant him the said Hyatt a charter and liscense to keep a ferry on the Tennessee River at George Town in Colbert County Ala, and the court being of



the opinion that a public Ferry across said River at the point above described would be a benefit to the public. It is therefore ordered, adjudged and decreed by the court that a service Ferry be and is hereby established on the Tennessee River at or near George Town for and during the term of Ten Years Commencing on this 11 day of April 1877 and terminating on the 11 day of April 1887. It is therefore ordered and decreed by the court that the Judge of Probate of said county issue to the above Leander F. Hyatt Licens to keep said ferry across the Tennessee River at Georgetown in said county of Colbert for and during the term of ten years upon his giving bond and security in the sum of Fifteen Hundred Dollars payable to the County of Colbert and conditioned that said Leander F. Hyatt keep safe and convenient with a Sufficient Number of ferrymen, and to keep the banks on each side of said river in good repair. And ordered further that the rates of ferriage be and they are hereby fixed by this court as follows to wit.

For Wagon and Six Horses or Oxen	\$1.50
Wagon and four horses, oxens or mules	\$1.25
Wagon or buggy with two horses, mules or oxen	\$1.00
Buggy with one horse or mule	0.75 cents
One man or horse or mule	50 cents
Horses or Mules per head loose	15 cents
Man or Woman Each	10 cents
Hogs, sheep or goats per head	5 cents

Colbert County, Commissioners Court Proceedings, February 24, 1879.

Whereas. By an Order of this Court made and entered on the 11th day of April 1877. A public Ferry was established across the Tennessee River at George Town in Colbert County for the term of five years from the said 11th April 1877. A Charter or Licens having issued to Leander Hyatt in accordance with Said order. Now comes the Said Leander Hyatt by John C. Goodloe and returns and filed in this Court the Charter or Licens issued to him from this court. And moves the Court that said Charter or Licens be now revoked, and that his bond as

such Ferryman be returned to him &c. Whereupon is now Ordered Adjudged and Decreed by the Court that Said Ferry be and the same is hereby Abolished as a public Ferry and that the Same be no longer used or conducted as a public ferry. It is further ordered that the Said Leander F. Hyatt abandon Said Ferry as a public ferry, and upon the abandonment of the Same that he be no further liable on his bond as Such Ferryman, but that the Said bond remain on file in this office, for future reference, &c.

## THE BONAPARTISTS IN ALABAMA.\*

By Anne Bozeman Lyon, of Mobile.

The tranquillity of Louis XVIII. was disturbed soon after his return from Ghent by the knowledge that there were men in his kingdom whose love for Napoleon might again prove dangerous. With this fear actuating him, he determined to send them from France. Fouche was told to write out the list of the persons who had conspired to re-establish the Empire during the first Restoration. There were two lists, one containing the names of some of the friends of the Minister of Police, to whom he was as merciless as to his enemies. The original number condemned to leave Paris was sixty, but it was reduced to thirty-eight by Louis. Nineteen of these were to be arrested and tried at once. They were: "Marshal Ney, Labedoyere, the two brothers Lallemand, Drouet, D'Erlos, Lefebvre-Desnouettes, Ameile, Brayer, Gilly, Mouton, Duvernet, Grouchy, Clausel, Deville, Bertrand, Drouot, Cambronne, Lavalette, Rovigo.†

In the other list were as famous men to be banished from Paris. Of these only Real, Garnier de Saintes and deCluis are of moment here. The ordonnance of July 24th, 1817, decreed that they should depart from Paris in three days and go where they would be under the espionage of the Minister of Police.

Nevertheless, Louis, Talleyrand, the Duke de Richelieu, and

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\*This article was originally printed in a short lived publication, **The Southern Home Journal**, Memphis 1900. Three years later it was reprinted in the **Gulf States Historical Magazine** which also enjoyed only a brief existence. Consequently it is scarcely available to the reader interested in the "Vine and Olive Colony." Because it is freely quoted in Gaius Whitfield's "The French Grant in Alabama" **Alabama Historical Society Publications**, IV, 321-364, the most exhaustive history of that romantic episode in Alabama history, it is deemed worth reprinting. This text is from the **Gulf States Historical Magazine**.

Miss Lyon, although born in Mobile, was a descendant of the Lyon family of Demopolis who played a prominent part in Alabama history during most of the nineteenth century. She was the author of a number of historical articles as well as fiction and poetry.—Ed.

†Lamartine's **L'Histoire de la Restauration**.

Fouche, the latter influenced, perhaps, by latent regard for his former party, thought it would be more advantageous to the Bourbons' interests to extenuate the fault of the offenders. To obviate the result of a trial the king and his ministers sought to provide the Bonapartists with money to escape. Even though the arrests were delayed and passports given the accused, they were finally arrested as they were fleeing from France. But many of them, with courage worthy of the man for whom they had dared so much, refused to go, as their departure would be a tacit admission of guilt.

The trial and execution of Labedoyere and ultimately of Ney were of such significance that, at the end of 1816 and beginning of 1817, a number of Imperialists were allowed to sail for Philadelphia. Broken in spirit they desired to be alone in a new country, a wilderness where they could be absolutely beyond the reach of the Bourbon's displeasure. Frenchmen themselves, they knew their people and their king. True, he had evinced much nobility toward them, but he might change. Fouche was at times implacable, and one was never sure of him. To elude him they decided to leave Philadelphia and go to the west. They looked to it as a refuge where they could gather up the shattered forces of brain and soul and begin another life.

After mature deliberation Colonel Nicholas Simon Parmentier, one of the emigrants, was sent to Washington to request the United States government to grant them a tract of land in the West. "An act to set aside and dispose of certain public lands for the encouragement and cultivation of the Vine and Olive, passed on the 3rd day of March, 1817." The Secretary of the Treasury was required "to designate and set apart any four contiguous townships, each six miles square of vacant public lands lying in that part of the Mississippi Territory, and now the Territory of Alabama, and authorized to contract for sale of said four townships at the rate of two dollars per acre to make payable fourteen years after the contract which should be concluded with any agent or agents of late emigrants from France who have associated together for the purpose of forming a settlement in the United States."\*

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\*American State Papers, vol. iii.

Clausel, Real, the Lallemands, the Vandammes, Lacanel, Peniers, Lefebvre-Desnouettes, Marshal Grouchy, Victor Grouchy, Pierre Drouet, de Cluis, the de Saintes, Garnier and his brother, General Raoul, Bazile Meslier, Simon Chaudron and Frederic Ravesies, agent of the "Tombeckbee Association," were the chief grantees.

During the absence of Colonel Parmentier the emigrants ascertained that the West was not the elysium they fancied, and were readily persuaded by a Kentucky gentleman, Dr. Samuel Brown, to establish their colony in Alabama near where the Tombigbee and Warrior rivers meet. He had traveled in France and felt sure the Bonapartists would find in the south a climate and soil so like their own that they would have no difficulty in the development of their agricultural projects. Besides they would feel a kinship with the people of a region that once belonged to France. Most potent thought of all, sympathy warm and deep would be given them; for there were Frenchmen in Mobile who loved Napoleon. Not far from Mobile was Louisiana; and proximity to that State might mean some hope, some plan for the future. Viewed from every standpoint, Alabama was the place to which they must journey—the unknown haven for which they had prayed since the Restoration. Before leaving for the south they organized the Vine and Olive Company and divided the land among its three hundred and forty members, nearly all soldiers and merchants. Mr. George N. Stewart was appointed their secretary. He married, in later years, a daughter of General David, whom he met in Philadelphia. Prosper Baltard, A. Mocquart and S. le Francois assisted the emigrants in the adjustment of their financial affairs.

Colonel Parmentier and others of the company left Philadelphia with some of the French gentlemen and their families on the McDonough, a schooner hired for that purpose. He wrote thus to a friend in Philadelphia of an accident that occurred while on board:\*

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\*National Intelligencer, Washington, July 17, 1817.

“Mobile Bay, May 26th, 1817.

“After a passage of 21 days from the capes of Delaware, we have arrived within sight of these shores, which not a soul on board had ever seen before; we had, however, a very narrow escape at the moment when about to gain this real land of promise; we were gliding gently along under favor of a pleasant breeze, lead in hand, when suddenly from nine fathom we made only two fathoms, or twelve feet, and before we could haul off, grounded. You may conceive the feeling of our associates under all our circumstances. However, we were fortunate in possessing in Capt. John McCloud, a mind experienced, collected and intrepid; his activity, presence of mind and excellent temper were not disturbed by the indiscreet conduct or the despair of those on board, whose imprudence and want of self-possession might have been fatal with a man of less manly and less resolute disposition; he may be fairly said to have saved every person on board by his firmness and discretion. By his good disposition we were enabled to obtain succor from Fort Boyer; a boat from which put off under its intrepid and generous commanding officer, Lt. R. Beal, of the artillery, and Captain Bourke, formerly of the army, who happened to be at the fort. These two gallant men with four privates put off on discovering our situation and succeeded in carrying our passengers on shore, after great and persevering fatigue; it is by men like these, whose profession inures them to danger and privations unknown in common life that the greatest acts of generosity are usually displayed; not content with rescuing us from danger of wreck they conducted us into the fort and with an affection the most unaffected taught us to forget the dangers we had escaped, and to bless the circumstances which enabled us to enjoy their generosity, hospitality and kindness; there was nothing the country could afford which we were not provided with, and they have left on our hearts impressions of gratitude which time cannot efface.

“Our vessel being lightened, and having suffered no injury, moved into the channel, and having obtained the requisite information to proceed to our destination, the same kindness which had flown to our relief, and contributed to our comfort and gratification on shore, conducted us on board, and accompanied by such a variety of refreshments and acts of goodness,



exercised towards individuals whom they had never before seen, but whose fortune and destiny appear to have found in their generous hearts a noble sympathy; they furnished us with letters of introduction to their friends. It is impossible to communicate the sense we entertained of the kindness we have experienced—to-morrow we ascend the river Mobile, from whence you shall hear from me again.

“The country on the margin of the sea presents a scene of the highest luxuriance. The foliage brighter than your more northern climate: this bay is a young sea, and appears to be unbounded; but it is too soon to give you any idea of a distinct landscape, or to speak to you of a soil which we have scarcely touched, and that towards which we are approaching too remote yet to be seen.”

Colonel Parmentier had opportunity to give his correspondent a minute account of the landscape as they stopped in Mobile. And the kindness they received made them fully realize that in the little foreign-looking town many hearts beat in unison with theirs when conversing of recent unfortunate events in France.

Addin Lewis, the Collector of the Port, supplied them with a barge in which they embarked and resumed the long voyage up the river. Another stay was made at Fort Stoddart, where Judge Harry Toulmin, a distinguished citizen of Alabama, to whom they took letters of introduction, welcomed them most hospitably. General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, the captor of Aaron Burr, then in command at Fort Montgomery, was next visited. He showed the travelers many courtesies also, and after a period of mutual pleasure they steered across to the Tombigbee and went to the town of St. Stephens. There they left the boat furnished by the government, and obtaining one more commodious proceed farther up the river. They explored the country carefully, then settled themselves at White Bluff. Obligated to dig trenches in which to keep their provisions, they burned bonfires at night to frighten away the beasts prowling in the forest.

Near “Old Fort Tombeckbee” some of the emigrants con-

sulted the United States Choctaw Factor, Mr. George Strother Gaines, concerning the location of the colony. He suggested that it should be at White Bluff. Jean A. Peniers and Bazile Meslier, who had been sent to the Red River to report upon its environs, joined the voyagers; and concurring with Mr. Gaines, they also decided upon White Bluff.

These two gentlemen despatched letters to Philadelphia containing a detailed description of Alabama and the inhabitants; their statements convinced the association of the practicability of colonizing the region selected.

With Indians for their nearest neighbors they made the home for which they had pined for the last two years—the log cabins were hardly completed before other members of the company arrived.

The actual needs of existence compelled them to hew away the forest and cut the tough canes to prepare small plots for the planting of garden seeds. This they did without knowing on what tracts they were to live permanently. Notwithstanding their incertitude the town of Demopolis was formed and named by Count Real, though it has been said it was not included in the French grants.

General Lefevre-Desnouette seems to have assumed leadership of the colony from the time he journeyed to Philadelphia in behalf of the settlers. Confusion had been caused in the distribution of the various lots, as the first emigrants to come made their own choice. But many of them had to relinquish their holdings because their associates in Philadelphia, ignorant of the country, had located the townships irrespective of the claimants. Mr. William H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, and Mr. Charles Vilar, agent of the association, had entered into a new contract, necessitating the sale of the lands and the designation of the owners who had received the allotments in Philadelphia. Unfortunately, General Desnouette could do nothing for his friends, but he rescued his own tract. Upon his return to Alabama he regretfully saw them leave their homes and begin afresh the labor of clearing the woods into which they went.



In spite of the pain of abandoning the humble cabins they had compensation in each other's society; it shone with the vivacity that characterized it in Paris. Madame Jerome de Cluis, and Madame Raoul, formerly the Marchesa Sinabaldi, maid of honor to Queen Caroline, were the spirit and centre of a delightful coterie. Madame de Cluis was Mademoiselle de Mezieres; an exquisite *grande dame* always, even though her life in Demopolis was filled with vicissitudes—more unendurable because of her youth and inexperience.

The ignorance of the colonists regarding the most ordinary domestic affairs was pitiable. There was a painful incongruity, too, between the very garments they wore and their daily work; the women milked and sowed corn in the velvet gowns and satin slippers they had danced in at court balls; the men ploughed and dug and sawed wood in their finest military clothes.

Ornaments that beautified their salons in France were brought to America; also books, musical instruments and paintings as well as china, glass and silver, the last often the gift of royal friends. Madame de Cluis' descendants treasure a massive silver coffee-pot which Napoleon gave to Joseph Bonaparte; the latter presented it to her when he became king of Spain. Perhaps it was a token of the immeasurable gratitude he felt to Colonel de Cluis for guarding the luckless Ferdinand so well. For had the aide-de-camp and secretary of the Duke de Rovigo relaxed his vigilance and the good Joseph might not have received a crown from his generous brother.

In despair, and wishing to put from him, if possible, the remembrance of the sorrow that had befallen him, de Cluis burned his papers before leaving France. His decorations are, however, still extant—three crosses of the Legion of Honor; in one is the same bit of crimson ribbon that was there the day the emperor fastened it on his breast.

The bravery that won for Nicholas Raoul the regard of Napoleon was not comparable to the fortitude with which he bore himself in his adversity. And, after struggling for the barest subsistence, he left his grant to support himself by

keeping a ferry at Demopolis. Although Real was one of the grantees there is no evidence that he lived long in the settlement. Neither did Clausel remain more than a year. Marshal Grouchy sent his son Victor to their allotment, for Waterloo was still so vivid a memory that his own presence could not be borne by his comrades; they thought he caused the defeat of that day but wishing to vindicate himself he carried on a verbal warfare with them in the American newspapers until his return to France. The Vendammes, Garnier de Saintes, his brother, Charles Batre and Frederick Ravesies completed that brilliant group. The last named of these gentlemen founded the town of Arcola on the Warrior river, and as agent of the association made authentic reports to Congress of the condition of the Vine and Olive Company. He married the widow of General David, whom he had met and loved before her first marriage.

The famous National Assembly, where the fate of Louis XVI. was decided, was represented by Jean A. Peniers and Monsieur Lacanel. Both had voted for the death of the king. During the empire Lacanel had charge of the Department of Education; a position that conferred many honors upon him. Another scholar was M. Simon Chaudron, the editor, when in Philadelphia, of "L'Abeille Americane." He was a writer of polish, and his poems, especially an ode to Napoleon, were indicative of genius of a lofty order.

Tradition asserts that the Marquis de Vaubercy, the last descendant of the princely counts of Champagne, was one of the colonists. But there is no mention of him by any of the Alabama historians in the annals of the settlement. That he was in Mobile is an authenticated fact as he married the daughter of Sir Robert Farmer, the first British Intendant of the town, presumably in the last century, as Sir Robert died in 1781, and his wife in 1795. In early youth the marquis had been a page of Louis XVI. and it is probable that he was driven from France by the disasters of the Revolution.

The largest part of the grant was in Marengo county, a name suggested after the arrival of the Bonapartists by a member of the Legislature. It was a holy thought to these soldiers of the Old Guard and army that their refuge should have commem-

orated the first great achievement of their invincible corps. Yet, trying as that terrible day had been, the survivors were destined now to fight harder battles than they had won and lost for their emporor. With him, renown, whether of victory or defeat had awaited every conflict; and here were toil and obscurity, the most unceasing warfare that can be waged by proud and haughty spirits—submission to poverty and petty mortifications.

As the settlers were again forced to leave Demopolis they laid off Aiglesville, which they had to abandon since it was not included in the grant. In obedience to some twist of fate the exodus became compulsory as soon as the log-houses were built and the gardens in a state to repay the strength expended on their cultivation. Of this M. Raviesies says in a letter to the President of the Senate: "We have in many instances been obliged to neglect the performances of our contract and yield to the more immediate and pressing demands of our industry for a large competency and support. Many of the grantees, unfortunately for themselves, came prematurely to the trackless desert impervious to the approach of man, without a road or passage, consequently the means of transportation to their particular allotment of land was so impracticable that many persons were compelled to settle temporarily on their small lots around the town of Aiglesville, and they became unable to make a second settlement upon their larger allotments."\*

No matter how far into the forest these men went some legal misunderstanding would arise decreeing that they go farther still from civilization. Besides, they experienced the same inconvenience from the need of horses and wagons as at White Bluff. A dearth of water in the canebrake caused them to leave the more fertile tracts untilled. As it was impossible for them unaided to continue to perform the constant labor of the fields, and having no negroes of their own, General Desnouettes suggested the importation of German redemptioners, which was accomplished by his energy and generosity. His kindness availed nothing; for the Germans, devoid of honor regarding their contract, were of no genuine help. The grain and vegetables

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\*American State Papers, vol. iii.

raised were at the cost of incredible wages—Desnouettes alone spent more than twenty-five thousand dollars on his tract. In consequence of such continual expenditure the colonists were discouraged and sold out to Americans.

Most of the settlers retaining their property now began in earnest the cultivation of grapes and olives. They frequently imported plants from Bordeaux which failed to flourish, possibly from the difference in soil or lack of knowledge of viticulture on the part of the French. Seven years elapsed before the soil was in condition to receive the vines. Of this M. Ravemies says: "Instead of seven, perhaps seventy years would be required correctly to ascertain this fact"\* Often the stocks would reach Alabama when the season was over and died when put in the earth. However, grapes were produced, but yielded poor wine, as the fruit matured in hot weather. In 1821 three hundred and eighty olive trees were planted and almost as many in 1824. The first winter they were killed, and every year after the shoots that sprang from the roots were destroyed.

In conjunction with repeated sickness and the futility of their efforts as growers of the vine and olive, the colonists were beset by squatters who unscrupulously took possession of the lands. Lawsuits ensued to be eventually decided in favor of the emigrants; but they had grown heartsick from disappointment and dispiritedly let the usurpers keep their land for an inadequate amount. Other Americans with a just appreciation of the grants bought them for a sum nearly sufficient to compensate the owners for their toil.

After the seizure and sale of the lands the colony was broken and scattered. With a tender recollection of the courtesy and sympathy they had received in Mobile a number of the emigrants removed to that city, though many remained in Marengo county.\*

The old Republican, Peniers, became agent for the Seminoles in Florida, dying there in 1823. General Raoul went to Mexico with his wife and stepchildren. He had the felicity of

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\*American State Papers, vol. iii.

ending his days as an officer of high rank in the army of the Bourbons. Colonel de Cluis lived for a long time in Greensborough, as much of the arable land which belonged to the grantees was in Greene county. But he also moved to Mobile, where he led a saddened existence for fifteen years, since he could never accustom himself to the change wrought by his exile. Madame de Cluis died a little more than a decade ago (about 1886), at the age of ninety-four. Toward the close of her life she suffered great agitation when alluding to the past, especially the fall of the Empire and the events that preceded her coming to America. Lacanel moved to Mobile as early as 1819; he lived down the bay until his departure for France in 1843. General Clausel was his neighbor. He, the general, sowed and reaped his homely crops of cabbage and potatoes as contentedly as the humblest peasant, and brought his produce to town to dispose of it, forgetful of his former station. Like Raoul he was recalled to France; then was made Governor of Algeria by Louis Philippe. Bazile Meslier, Frederic Ravesies and Simon Chaudron lived and died in Mobile. Of the Vandammes, de Saintes and Drouet, nothing is related save that they occupied their tracts. Charles Batre and the Hurtels also left their allotment to live in Mobile.

The career of none of these Bonapartists in Alabama began more brilliantly than that of Colonel Emile de Vendel. Born in Paris about the time of the death of Louis XVI, his childhood and youth were passed in the turbulent adjustment of the new regime. When Napoleon was at the apex of his supremacy the boy de Vendel entered the service of the Commissioner-General of the *Grande Armee* as secretary. In a short period he filled the same position to the Duke de Cadore, there displaying the intellect and judgment of maturity. At the end of three years he left the duke with the most laudatory letters to Marshal Kellerman; they were answered in phraseology as courtly and appreciative of his talents. He was at once enrolled as one of the National Guard and given the place of *Marechal de Logie*. Later he went through the campaign of 1813. On February 27th, 1814, the title of *Chevalier d'Honneur* was bestowed on him by order of the emperor.



The exile to Elba, a bitter blow to the young soldier, only deepened his love for Napoleon. And, with courage worthy of his ancestor at Agincourt, de Vendel offered himself, in company with three other youths, to carry despatches to the island. The secrecy with which this hazardous errand was conducted resulted in Bonaparte's return to France. No stronger proof of their devotion could be found than the letter they wrote to him soon after the escape from Elba. The following is an exact copy of it:

A Sa Majeste L'Empereur:

Sire:—Permettez que quatres jeunes francaises uni par les liens de l'amitie presente a votre majeste l'ecrit de la disgrace que leur a fait eprouver leur devouement a son auguste personne.

Vous n'apprenez pas sans interet, Sire, une detention contraire aux lois de l'etat, et qui n'etait motivee que sur un sincere attachment a la nation et a votre dynastie.

Sensible a l'honneur, actifs et courageux, nous avons toujours aime de la France et votre Majeste. Comment avec de tels sentiments aurions nous pu rester dans un pays dont la gloire semblait etre eclipsee pour jamais?

Nous avions forme le projet de suivre votre Majeste dans son exile volontaire. Ce projet ne pu etre executre que par l'un de nous.

Il eut l'honneur de vous parler et de vous offrir ses faibles services; les autres arretes en route par les agents d'un gouvernement soupconneux, n'ont pas en le meme bonheur. Injustement incarceres, nous avons ete en proie tous les quatres aux plus odieuses persecutions. Dans l'age due courage et de la formete, nos coeurs n'ont point ebranles par cette eprouve.

Votre Majeste dans sa retraite ne pouvait entendres les voeux que nous faisons pour son retour. Aujourd'hui nos desirs se trouvent si heureusement accomplis, les malheurs que nous avons eprouve la visite que nous avons faite a votre Majeste

pendant son infortune passagere, nous donnent peut-etre le droit de la feliciter sur sa rentree glorieuse dans un empire qui va de nouveau briller de son eclat.

Heureux si nos sentiments manifestes dans un temps il etait dangereux de paraître attaches a votre cause, peuvent attirer sur nous les regards bienveillants de votre Majeste. Puisse nous, Sire, vous faire agreer les services que nous avons offerts en des jours moins prospere.

Nous prouverons par notre conduite que vous n'avez pas sujets plus fideles, plus devoues, et des serviteurs plus dignes de votre confiance.

Nous avons l'honneur d'être avec le plus profond respect, Sire, de votre Majeste, les humbles et tres obeissant serviteurs et sujets.

Regnier,  
exchiron de l'armee, depute  
de la Ville de Joinville.

Lavocat,  
depute de la Ville de Joinville.

Poumourel, avocat.

De Vendel,  
Intendant gde de la Couronne, ExS. chef de div. a la chancie de l'ordre de la Reunion.

On the wrapper enclosing de Vendel's manuscript is written: "Histoire de ma captivite en France (Paris) comme Prisonnier d'Etat accuse de favoriser le retour de l'empereur Napoleon de l'ile d'Elbe en 1814.

"Manuscrit publie apres le retour de l'empereur dans la brochure qui fut presente par moi-meme, et mes tres compagnons d'infortune, a la seance que obtin mes dans la grand Salle de Marechaux aux Tuileries.

"Tous quatre gracieusement, accueilles par l'Empereur."

The reply to this expression of love is not among the yellow time-darkened papers de Vendel left, written in a hand so small that a lens has to be used to decipher them. It is evident that



Napoleon granted their request as he honored them with an interview in which he thanked them for their demonstrations of fidelity. He also named them to the Lord Chamberlain for preferment. M. de Vendel was nominated, May 10th, 1805, to the Sous Prefecture of the Department of the Seine and Marne. Napoleon had had evidence before this of de Vendel's reliability and affection for himself; and in expressing his thanks for what the young man had done—the commission was of a private nature—he took from his belt a richly chased and jeweled dagger which he gave him. After the Restoration de Vendel was imprisoned six months for the part he bore in the return of Napoleon. But knowing his loyalty made it impossible to look for aught from the Bourbons, he left France and came to America in Joseph Bonaparte's suite. A friend writing of de Vendel at that time says of him: "Although but twenty-four years of age, the glory of his life was gone; the buoyancy of youth and hope had fled; the great object of his existence was defeated, and the exalted purposes which clustered around it only tortured his soul by the utter impossibility of their realization."

De Vendel brought from Lafayette letters to the most eminent personages in Washington, for between the general and himself was a sincere friendship. He spent some months in the Capital, then went to New York. There he married Mademoiselle Josephine Bancal de Confluent, a daughter of Sieur Louis Bancal, formerly Grand Equerry to Louis XVI.; a gentleman who escaped the guillotine to find a home in this country. De Vendel finally settled in Huntsville, Alabama; he afterward moved to Mobile. He did not remain long in town, but bought a place at Spring Hill. His daughters were educated there; the eldest was Madame Adelaide de Vendel Chaudron, one of the most distinguished women in the South. Had it not been for her desire to shun publicity the world would have been enriched by her brilliant literary achievements. As it was, however, she produced many virile and apposite editorials; her work on the Mobile Register, under the guidance of Col. John Forsyth, has never been equalled by any other feminine journalistic matter in the State. Her translation of Joseph the Second and His Court stamps her as a linguist of rare attainment.

Much could be said of the little suburb where the de Vendels

lived, and of Bishop Portier. Surrounded by cultured French families, he held a veritable court, famed for its wit and elegance. Thus, amid the friends to whom the splendor of Napoleon's genius was as dear as to himself, de Vendel passed his life; it was that of a man whose moral greatness triumphed over his disappointments and griefs.

Wearying of the monotony of the settlement, Charles Antoine Lallemand returned to Philadelphia, whence he wrote to his brother Henri: "I have more ambition than can be gratified by the colony upon the Tombigbee." Alas, for his exalted dream of a spot where the soldiers of the Empire could be saved from the degradation he fancied awaited them as mere tillers of the earth. His "*Champs d'Asile*," established through the support and approval of Joseph Bonaparte, failed to give to the sore hearts gathered there the ease they craved.

It is curious to observe that wherever the officers of the Old Guard and army went they took with them a hope of rescuing Napoleon. In the canebrakes of Alabama and the forests of Texas they spent hours talking of his deliverance. Lallemand dwelt on the vision of liberation until it almost became an actuality to himself and Desnouettes, who had joined him in Texas. Their delight, as well as that of their comrades in Alabama, was infinite when it was known that their trust in Louisiana had not been groundless; for Stephen Girod and other Bonapartists in New Orleans, with a number in Charleston, had conceived a plot to rescue Napoleon.\* But his death frustrated it, ending forever the dormant belief of the exiles in their own ability to vitalize the ruins of imperial power into an imperishable dynasty.

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\*There is a detailed account of this plot in the Guide-Book to the Crescent City, published in 1884 or 1885.

## THE STATE CAPITOL IN MONTGOMERY\*

by

*Mathew Powers Blue*

*Removal of the State Capitol.* The news of the final action of the General Assembly relative to the removal of the State Capitol, reached Montgomery, by the Western Stage, on Friday night, the 30th of January, 1846. The citizens of course, were highly elated and gave full expression to their joyful feelings. The next day, at a called meeting of the City Council, it was resolved to have a public celebration, on the occasion. At the request of the Council, the "True Blues" fired one hundred guns on Capitol Hill, on the night of the 31st of January. There was also, a general illumination of the houses on Market Street, almost turning night into day. The citizens abandoned every employment and walked up and down that street, for hours, each congratulating the other upon the successful termination of the Removal issue, opening up as it did, unwonted prosperity and importance to our City.

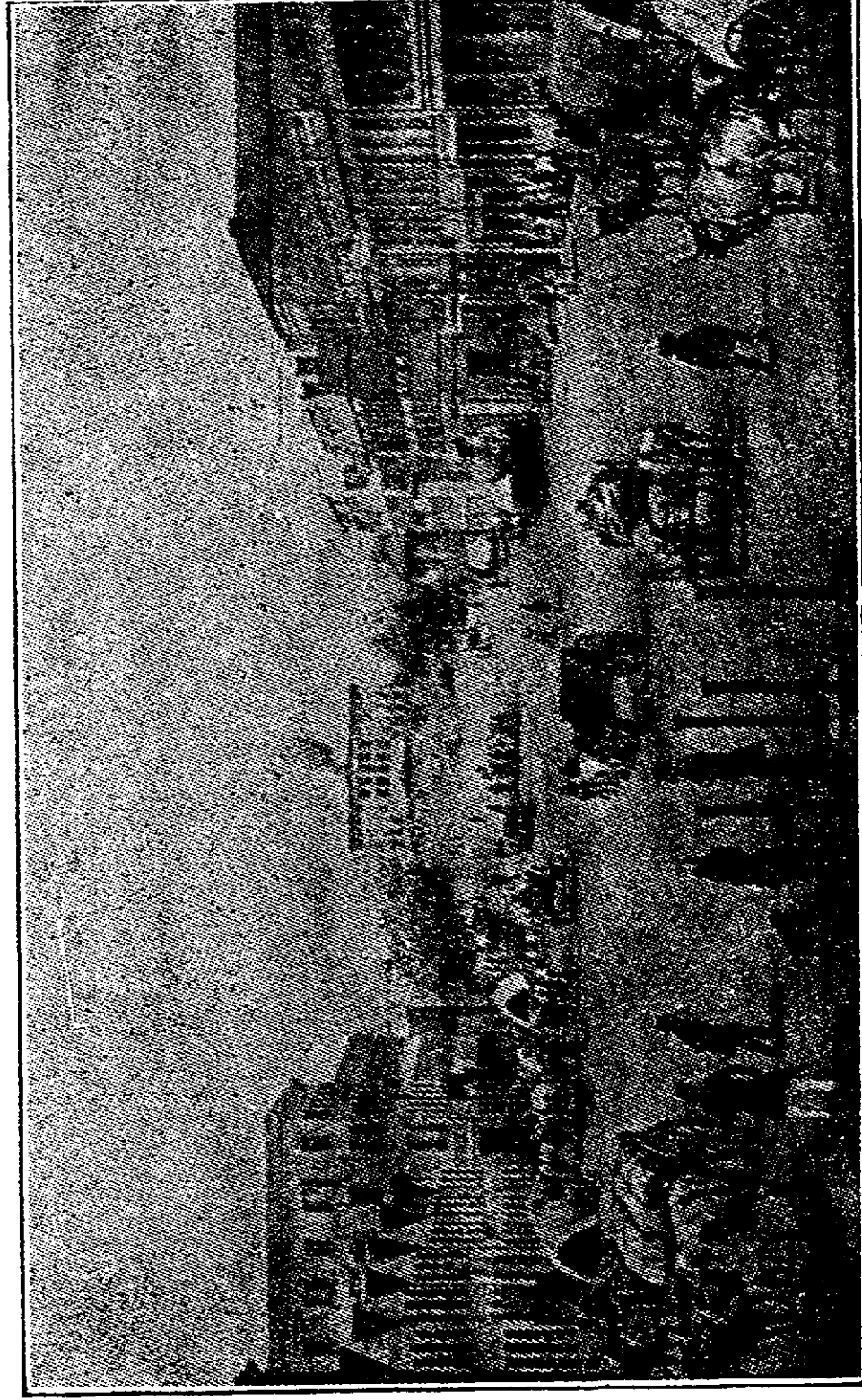
*First Capitol in Montgomery.* On the 14th of February, 1846, a public meeting of the citizens of Montgomery, was held to take steps relative to the erection of a State Capitol. It was considered important to redeem the pledge made to the Legislature by the representatives of our City when the question of the location of the seat of Government was pending. They had promised that in case it was removed to Montgomery, none of the cost of the new building should fall upon the State Treasury. At this public meeting Col. Charles T. Pollard presented the subject of an issue of City Bonds for the purpose, in a lucid and forcible manner. Not only so, but he demon-

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\*This undated and unsigned article in the handwriting of Mathew Powers Blue is among the Blue papers in the Alabama Archives and History Department. Mr. Blue, who was born in Montgomery in 1824 and spent his entire life in that city, was the author of a history of Montgomery published in Beale and Phelan's Montgomery City Directory of 1878. This article printed here as supplemental information to James B. Simpson's "Alabama State Capitol," **Alabama Historical Quarterly**, XVIII, 81-125, was probably written between 1866 and 1878.—Ed.

trated the practicability and advantage of the bonds being taken by the citizens of Montgomery. He assured the meeting that within six months, the bonds could be sold abroad for eighty cents on the dollar in any event, thus resulting in a loss of only twenty per cent, an amount insignificant compared with the increase in value of Real Estate and the accession of new capital in the City, consequent upon the building of the new State House. Resolutions were adopted expressive of the sense of the meeting which asked the City Council to issue the Bonds immediately in accordance with the amendment of the City Charter. A petition numerously signed by the Real Estate owners was communicated to the City Council by Mayor Perez Coleman, at a meeting held on the 3rd of March, 1846. Mayor Coleman also, presented a preamble and resolutions to carry out the prayer of the petitioners which was adopted. City Bonds to the extent of \$75,000 were issued which were readily taken at par by the citizens, all of which are now redeemed. The following gentlemen were appointed a committee of superintendence of the building. Charles T. Pollard, Nimrod E. Benson, Silas Ames, Justus Wyman, William Knox, Thomas S. Mays, Charles Crommelin, John Whiting, Wade Allen and Mayor Coleman. The contract was adjudged to Messrs R. N. R. Bardwell and Bird F. Robinson, of Columbus, Georgia, who also became contractors for the Exchange Hotel. Mr. Stephen D. Button was the architect. Besides the \$75,000, the City also expended a large amount in grading Capitol Hill, the contractor for which was Mr. James D. Randolph. The Corner Stone was laid on the 4th of July, 1846 by the Masonic fraternity, with imposing ceremonies, and the edifice was completed and finished in time for the Session of 1847-48.

*Burning of the State Capitol.* The beautiful Capitol erected by the City of Montgomery in 1846-47 was totally consumed by fire on Friday, December 14, 1849. At 1½ o'clock p.m. it was discovered to be on fire under the roof near the rotunda and in a few hours, the structure, with the exception of a portion of the walls, was level with the earth. The two houses of the General Assembly were in session at the time but quickly adjourned. Every effort was made by the members and the citizens to save the building but it was soon evident there was no hope. The furniture, records &c were removed but in a some-



### BURNING OF THE CAPITOL

Lithograph by Sarony and Major made from

A. G. Park's daguerotype



what damaged condition. By a singular oversight, there was no insurance on the building, either by the City or the State. The origin of the fire has never been definitely ascertained. Some suggested that it occurred from a defective flue but the flues had been repeatedly tested by the building committee who found them to be correct. The late John B. Taylor, so well known here for over twenty five years, and who died in Mobile in March of last year, often declared that he could probably locate the incendiary. This he promised provided he was allowed to return to Montgomery, without molestation for previous gaming. Some of the citizens always suspected the then door keeper of the House of Representatives, the devoted friend of Tuscaloosa and bitter opponent to the removal of the seat of Government. No proof however could be adduced against him or any one else so that the mystery has never been cleared up. The late Joseph T. Moon, portrait and scene painter, executed an admirable painting of the conflagration which hung for many years, in the old Rialto. Mr. A. G. Park, also, daguerreotyped the scene from the Court House then on the site of the Artesian Basin, just before the rotunda fell in, which was lithographed in New York.



## THE WHITE BASIS SYSTEM AND THE DECLINE OF ALABAMA WHIGGERY

by

*Carlton Jackson*

*Western Kentucky State College*

It is true that state borders rarely made any difference in political developments in the states of the Old South, but the White Basis system provided an interesting and important exception. The Federal Constitution states in Article 1, Section 2, that representatives "shall be apportioned among the several states . . . according to their respective numbers . . . by adding to the whole number of free persons . . . three-fifths of all other persons." The White Basis system, however, eliminated the Three-Fifths compromise. Only white people were counted when Federal representation was apportioned. Such a procedure would wreak havoc upon a party which depended on the number of slaves owned by its members to determine in part the amount of representation it would have in the Federal congress.

The principle of the White Basis was applied by the Democratic party in the Alabama Legislature of 1843. The passage of the bill delineated Whig difficulties on both the State and national levels. The Whigs in Alabama attempted vainly in the 1840's and 1850's to destroy the White Basis, their attack tapering off only in the late 1850's because of their fight to stay alive as a political party.

The White Basis made Alabama Whiggery unique in relation to Whig parties in other Southern states. The system, plus effective gerrymandering by the Democrats, held the Whigs powerless from 1843 to the outbreak of the Civil War.

When the Alabama Whigs had experienced success in 1841, through a coalition of Whigs and Democrats of the Black Belt (where resided the greatest concentrations of slaves), in re-

pealing the General Ticket system,<sup>1</sup> great strength was forecast for the party. This newly won outlook for Alabama Whiggery, however, had only made the Democrats more determined than ever to destroy the Whig party.

The introduction, then, in early 1843 of the White Basis system, originated by the fertile mind of Governor Benjamin Fitzpatrick and carried to the Legislature by his followers, looked to the complete dominance of the Democratic party in the State. The proposed system would reconstruct congressional districts in accordance with the census of 1840 on the basis of white population only. With whites only being enumerated, the "white" counties of North Alabama would gain an advantage in representation over the Black Belt.

The Whigs hoped that the bill could be defeated by appealing to the Democrats in the Black Belt who would no longer be allowed to count three-fifths of their slaves when representation was apportioned. The Whigs hoped to prove that the bill would give too many advantages to North Alabama at the expense of South Alabama. The Whig press noted with regret, however, that South Alabamians were apathetic about the White Basis. At a time when great protests should have been forthcoming, the Black Belt had been little excited about the affair.<sup>2</sup>

The White Basis bill was enacted on February 13, 1843 by a combination of votes from North and South Alabama Demo-

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<sup>1</sup>The system, passed in Alabama on January 1, 1841, destroyed the traditional district method of electing Federal representatives and gave to the Democrats a preponderance of political power. By using the General Ticket system, the Democrats could hold down the number of Whig representatives in the congressional delegations. Since approximately 45 per cent of the State voted in the Whig column in most elections, the Whig party was entitled to three of the seven congressmen going to the national capital. But because of the General Ticket system, largely, the Whigs were rarely able to send more than two congressmen. Alabama's General Ticket system was destroyed on December 17, 1841, six months before the Federal Apportionment Act of June 25, 1842, which provided that every state populous enough to be entitled to more than one representative must be divided by the Legislature into districts "composed of contiguous territory."

<sup>2</sup>Alabama Journal, February 1, 1843.

crats. Although the White Basis ran counter to the desires of the South Alabama Democrats, they preferred to see the Whigs weakened than enjoy any equality of representation with North Alabama. The bill divided the State into seven congressional districts according to white population, each district having the right to one representative. To make the White Basis even more powerful, as many Whig counties as possible were gerrymandered into two congressional districts. The remaining Whig counties were distributed among the other five districts to give an additional advantage in representation to the Democrats.<sup>3</sup> Under the White Basis the Black Belt Democrats who favored the bill "furnished the leadership and the North Alabama Democrats furnished the number which gave the Democrats political control of the state."<sup>4</sup> One Whig senator was so distraught over this development that he exclaimed that "were he to catch [Alabama] sleeping on the brink of hell, he'd push her in."<sup>5</sup>

The Whigs protested that the Democrats were in violation of the Federal Constitution by passing the White Basis. The system, said the Whigs, impaired the right of slaveholding people to more representation than non slaveholders in accordance with the three-fifths compromise. The Democratic measure aimed, therefore, at overthrowing a practice that had been used successfully since the formation of the Government. The White Basis gave an undue advantage to the Northern part of the State over the Southern, and it gave too much power to the dominant party over those "who differ with them in opinion." There were about four Negroes in South Alabama to one in North Alabama. The legal ratio of Federal representation, said the Whigs, was one representative for each 70,000 people. Under the White Basis, there was one representative for each 47,872 persons. This condition not only violated Federal law, but it gave the northern abolitionists an opportunity to reopen the debate on slavery.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Lewy Dorman, **Party Politics in Alabama from 1850 Through 1860** (Wetumpka, Alabama, 1935), 96.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Albert B. Moore, **History of Alabama** (University of Alabama, 1935), 236.

<sup>6</sup>**Alabama Journal**, February 1, 1843.

The White Basis bill, combined with the gerrymandering of 1843, helped to eliminate much Whig power in Alabama at a time when the party contained as much as 45 per cent of the voting population. It is interesting to note that in presidential elections from 1836 to 1856, the Whig nominees won an average of 45 per cent of Alabama's votes.<sup>7</sup> According to numbers and geographical placement in the various districts, therefore, the Alabama Whigs should have had three representatives in the Federal congress rather than the usual two.

The bill existed at a time, too, when Whig organizations in adjacent states were enjoying successes in political contests. This is seen by the following statistics: From 1843 to the mid 1850's (at which time the Whig party became ineffectual throughout the South, due mainly to the Know-Nothing movement) the percentage of Whigs sent from Alabama to the national congress was only 22.4. Tennessee Whigs captured 53.9 per cent of the congressional delegation in 1843; and 46.2 per cent in the Thirtieth (1847-1849) and the Thirty-second (1851-1853) congresses. Florida's Whig percentage for the Twenty-ninth through the Thirty-second congresses (1845-1853) was 33.3; Georgia's delegation was 50 per cent Whig during the Thirtieth congress (1847-1849) and 40 per cent during the Thirty-second congress. Alabama's other sister state, Mississippi, sent a delegation to the Thirtieth congress that was 33.4 per cent Whig. By the Thirty-second congress, Mississippi's delegation was wholly Democratic, because of the appointment of Jefferson Davis to complete the Senatorial term of Jesse Speight, a Whig.<sup>8</sup>

These statistics indicate the forcefulness of Alabama's White Basis plan. Its low percentage of Whig congressmen

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<sup>7</sup>Grady McWhiney, "Were the Whigs a Class Party in Alabama?" *Journal of Southern History* XXIII (November, 1957), 512.

<sup>8</sup>*Congressional Globe*, 28-32 Congs; 1-2 sess., 1. The statistics were computed from a study of congressional personnel as they were listed in the *Globe* from the 28th through the 32nd Congresses. Statistics for some of the other Southern states indicate that Whig representation in congressional delegations during this time was: Louisiana, 28 per cent, North Carolina, 66 per cent, Virginia, 21 per cent, South Carolina had no Whigs in congressional delegations. South Carolina's statistics can be explained partly, by the fact that no strong two party system developed there as in other Southern areas.

during the 1840's can be traced directly to the operation of this system. The states bordering Alabama, while not having many Whig majorities, were always able to send more Whigs to congress than Alabama because of the absence of the White Basis program of representation.

One may ask why, if the White Basis was so effective against the Whigs in Alabama, it was not used by one of the parties in the bordering states. The answer comes from observing that the White Basis could operate only when there was a strong two party system and, more important, when slaveholding was greatly uneven in the sections of a state. For example, the twenty-two northermost counties in Alabama were approximately 25 per cent slave in relation to white population during the 1840's. In the same period, northern Mississippi had a slave population in relation to the white of 45 per cent. For north Georgia, the percentage was 34.<sup>9</sup> In Mississippi and Georgia, slavery was more evenly distributed than in Alabama, making impractical the operation of a White Basis system in those two states by either party. In Mississippi, especially, there was no sharp increase in slavery farther South as was the case with Alabama. To a lesser extent, what was true for Mississippi was also true for Georgia. The sharp animosity that prevailed between large sections of North and South Alabama<sup>10</sup> was not present in the same degree between northern and southern sections of Mississippi and Georgia.

The northern area of Tennessee was only 16 per cent slave, but the Negro population in the entire state never exceeded 25 per cent.<sup>11</sup> As early as 1834 in Tennessee, for example, a move-

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<sup>9</sup>J. G. Randall and David Donald, **Civil War and Reconstruction** (Boston, 1961), 66. Statistics were computed from a study of a map.

<sup>10</sup>Much has been written, of course, to explain the rise of sectionalism within Alabama. In the southern part of the State the soil was rich and well suited to the production of cotton. In the northern and more mountainous areas cotton was not grown in abundance. This difference in agricultural objectives in the State helped to develop political and economic dissimilarities. Added to the difference in agricultural objectives, were the poor transportation and communication facilities, which made contact among citizens negligible.

<sup>11</sup>Robert Corlew, Middle Tennessee State College, Department of History, letter to the writer, January 5, 1963.



ment was underway, led mostly by East Tennesseans, for gradual emancipation.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is easily seen that the relatively small numbers of slaves in Tennessee made the White Basis less attractive there than in Alabama. This is seen also by the fact that the Whigs in Tennessee controlled 25 counties between 1836 and 1850, as opposed to Democratic control of 38 counties. There were 17 "uncertain" counties in Tennessee during this period.<sup>13</sup> Neither party in Tennessee, then, could gain the upper hand as in Alabama, so opportunities for a White Basis system in Tennessee were minimal.

Florida's slave population was concentrated in the northern part of the territory, in the area contiguous to South Alabama. Sectional difficulties had not affected Florida in the 1840's in the sense that they had in Alabama because of the lateness of Florida's entry into the Union (March 3, 1845).

Largely because of the White Basis system, Alabama's position in regard to her sister states was unique. With only one exception from the 1840's to the outbreak of the Civil War the Whig party in Alabama showed little strength in comparison to Whiggery in other Southern states. That exception came when Alabama cast 30,482 votes (approximately 49 per cent) for Zachary Taylor in 1848, only 881 less than the 31,363 for Lewis Cass.<sup>14</sup> But Taylor's strength can be explained mostly by the belief of many South Alabama Democrats that Taylor was more committed to slavery expansion than Cass.

The White Basis doomed Alabama's Whig party to a permanent minority status. Even though the General Ticket law<sup>15</sup> was repealed in 1841, six months before the Federal Apportionment Act of 1842, it was done only because the South Alabama Democrats willed it. But the Black Belt Democratst refused

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<sup>12</sup>Chase Mooney, "The Question of Slavery and the Free Negro in the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834," *Journal of Southern History* XII (November, 1946). 487-489.

<sup>13</sup>Thomas Alexander, "Whiggery and Reconstruction in Tennessee," *Journal of Southern History* XVI (August, 1950), 291-292.

<sup>14</sup>*The Old Zack*, November 23, 1848. This newspaper was created especially for the purpose of aiding the Whig campaign in Alabama in 1848.

<sup>15</sup>See footnote No. one.



to give the same kind of support to Whiggery to get the White Basis repealed.

The White Basis set in motion the steady destruction of the Alabama Whig party. The Democrats propagandized when seeking support for the bill that the aristocracy and "moderation on slavery" of the Whigs would be weakened. When the bill was tied to the slavery question, the Democrats could convince the majority of the people that the Whigs were soft in that area; thus, the bill could be relatively easily retained by the same combination of North and South Alabama Democratic votes which passed it in the first place. The White Basis system, the gerrymander of 1843, and the gerrymander of 1853<sup>16</sup> provided the chief weapons by which the Alabama Democrats continued their fight against the Whigs until the Whigs were no more.

Many questions are unresolved concerning the White Basis system and merit further study: Were there ever any attempts by Alabama Whigs or Whigs from neighboring states to use their influence at the Federal level to abolish what was clearly an unconstitutional activity in Alabama? Why didn't the Alabama Whigs seek a redress of grievances through the Federal courts? Of course, part of the answer to these questions is that too much tampering with the White Basis system would have reopened the debate on slavery — something that neither the north nor the south relished.

To what extent did the rift between President Tyler and the national Whig party make it possible for the White Basis to be passed and retained? To what extent did national leaders such as Clay, Calhoun, and Webster speak out on the system? Were they alarmed about it or did they think it trivial?

Did either party in states bordering Alabama ever attempt to install the system despite the lack, in many cases, of a strong

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<sup>16</sup>Under this law, Montgomery, always a stronghold of Whiggery despite the White Basis and the gerrymandering was moved, along with Wetumpka and Talladega, from the second into the third congressional district. This neutralized the Whig position in Montgomery. The effects of this law helped to steer many Whigs toward other political movements—primarily the Know-Nothing—in a desperate effort to weaken the tremendous power of the Democrats.

two party system and uneven geographical placement of slaves? Finally, how much can be credited, if anything, to the White Basis system for the great struggle between North and South Alabama in 1861 over the question of immediate secession from the Union?

These and other questions about the White Basis indicate that the system was of more importance than has been heretofore attached to it.

## A GREAT DAY FOR THE WHIGS OF ALABAMA

*Edited by**Virginia K. Jones, Manuscripts Librarian**Department of Archives and History*

On the twenty-fourth of October, 1844, a Whig convention met in Montgomery. We have three accounts by eye-witnesses of the great enthusiasm displayed on this occasion.

The first account was recorded in the diary of Hardy Vickers Wooten, a native of Burke County, Georgia, who, at the age of twenty-two, received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1836. After a few months of travel Dr. Wooten settled in Lowndes County, Alabama, and practiced medicine in Lowndesboro for many years. Business was dull in 1844, and the young doctor was an interested participant in promoting Whig sentiment. The following excerpts from his diary for that year show the growing political enthusiasm in his locality.

Feb. 24 Still fine weather. See by the Newspapers that I was appointed by a Whig meeting on the 22nd on a committee to draft the views of the party to report at the next meeting on the second Saturday in March, and to form a Constitution &c. for a Clay Club in this county.—No business.

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Mar. 6 Went to Montgomery on board the Bourbon; rained at night, found it difficult to get lodging on account of the tremendous crowd which had gathered to see Henry Clay. Every place was literally crammed—

Mar. 7 Saw Mr. Clay arrive in Montgomery and heard him speak, an elequent and feeling reply to Col. Williams who welcomed him. The largest crowd, I think, that I ever saw on any occasion, notwithstanding it was a very rainy day. But as Mr. Clay remarked, his friends are "not far weather friends." I never

saw such enthusiasm as was manifested, almost unanimously by the crowd.

Mar. 8 Left Montgomery about day [break] on the same boat that carried me up, and reached home by noon; feel rather jaded for want of rest, yet well pleased with the trip. Business nearly out.

Mar. 9 Turned pretty cool. Planted early corn and water melon seeds. Mr. Clay continued in Montgomery and received a great deal of company yesterday, left today on his way to N. Carolina.

\* \* \* \*

April 15 Went to Hayneville—Court, & Whig meeting.

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April 26 Very hot, wrote to Dr. Garvin, E. S. Sayre & Hon. A. H. Stephens. Whigs met and formed a Clay Club.

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May 4 Clay Club met. The chairman of the committee to report a preamble and resolutions being absent, it fell on me, which I did, and urged the matter in an extempore speech of 40 minutes. Fine weather.

\* \* \* \*

May 11 Very hot. Rec'd a letter from Hon. A. H. Stephens, giving me an account of the Baltimore Convention, &c.

May 13 Very hot, business dull. Democratic Party held a meeting in Hayneville in favor on annexing Texas to this country immediately. They are trying desperately to make party capital out of this question. Farmers are wanting rain.

\* \* \* \*

May 17 Still very hot, getting dry. Business dull. Democrats from about Hayneville came down and held a meeting here on the Texas question which they got up slyly, and endeavored to pass resolutions in favor of "immediate annexation" in order to get as many pledged as possible for it, so as to favor the pros-

pects of their yet unknown "third candidate" for the Presidency who is to run *on this question* for the purpose of cutting off as many votes as possible from Clay. But they were met by resolutions for annexing according to *order* and *honor*, which were adopted.

\* \* \* \*

May 23 Moderate rain. Business out. Wrote to Hon. A. H. Stephens.

\* \* \* \*

May 29 Rainy. Friends of immediate annexation of Texas held a meeting...

\* \* \* \*

June 8 Hot; thunder about; getting dry. Went to Hayneville—a Whig meeting—...

\* \* \* \*

June 18 Hot, a large rain. The Treaty which our President had made with Texas ministers for the annexation of that country to this, has been rejected by our U. S. Senate by a vote of 35 to 16. Political excitement getting pretty high.

\* \* \* \*

June 24 Fair & hot, rather cool morning. Mr. Yancey, the Democratic Candidate for Congress made a speech here...

\* \* \* \*

June 29 Still hot. Wrote to Hon. D. E. Watrous the Whig Candidate for Congress in this district, inviting him to visit this county, &c.

\* \* \* \*

July 10 ... Rec'd letter from the Partner of Hon. D. E. Watrous our candidate for Congress; he says that Mr. W. has not returned from the North, and of course cannot visit our county before the Election.

\* \* \* \*

July 16 Hot. Candidates held a meeting here and addressed the people. Business out.

- Aug. 5 Fair, hot day. Election. Whigs all Elected 85 maj. . . .  
\* \* \* \*
- Aug. 17 Light rain. Wrote . . . a letter to "Nashville Whig."  
Heard that the recent elections in N. C. have gone  
for the Whigs, and Whigs here burnt some gun  
powder.  
\* \* \* \*
- Oct. 6 Light rain. Dull times. But great excitement over the  
county on the subject of the Presidential Election.  
\* \* \* \*
- Oct. 11 Returned from Montgomery where I went yesterday.  
Saw the great "prize Banner" which is to be given  
to the county which sends the largest delegation  
to the Whig Convention on the 24th.  
\* \* \* \*
- Oct. 14 Went to Hayneville, C. Court commenced; light rain;  
Whig meeting. Speeches by Col. Williams and Judge  
Hunter.  
\* \* \* \*
- Oct. 21 Rained last night, and cloudy & sprinkling today.  
Ladies finished the Banner for the Clay Club to  
carry to the great Whig Convention at Montgomery  
on the 24th.  
\* \* \* \*
- Oct. 23 Went to Montgomery to attend the great Whig Con-  
vention, found the Town literally crammed &  
jammed with people of all sexes, and from all parts  
of the State, and they continued to arrive until noon  
\* \* \* \*
- Oct. 24 When there was the largest crowd that ever met  
in Alabama, the general estimate was ten thousand.  
I was appointed Marshall for the Lowndes delega-  
tion & although I never saw the duties performed  
before I made out as I think pretty well with my  
speech &c., &c. Judge Hopkins & Judge Hunter of  
this state made *very powerful* speeches, but the most  
complete thing in the way of a speech was made by  
the Hon. A. H. Stephens of Georgia. *Many* other



speeches were made by day and by night, and I left Mr. Watts of Butler speaking.

\* \* \* \*

Oct. 25      Returned home very tired. Had fine weather the whole time.

\* \* \* \*

The Huntsville *Southern Advocate* issue of November 8 quotes a correspondent of the *Mobile Advertiser*:

"I have just returned from the Whig Mass Convention of Montgomery county, and such a Convention!...In the evening five or six thousand assembled in the city of Montgomery in front of the principal Hotel, where five or six eloquent speeches weremade. Among these I noticed the elequent Childers, of our city; Mr. Bestor, of Greene; Mr. Beman, of Wetumpka; Mr. McLemore, the electoral candidate, and others."

We may assume that Mr. Childers and Mr. McLemore had been planning their appearance at the convention for several weeks ahead. The presence of Mr. Bestor, of Greene County, however, had not been so arranged, but was the result of an unintentional miscarriage of plans.

Daniel Perrin Bestor, Baptist minister and teacher, was very worried about the health of his wife, the daughter of the Rev. John Leigh Townes, of the Tennessee Valley area. At this time Mr. Bestor, with his wife, baby and nurse, were traveling from Greene County, Alabama, to Augusta, Georgia, to consult a doctor there. Their trip was made less exhausting for Mrs. Bestor and baby by a stop in Montgomery, which just happened to occur on October 24th. Here are portions of a letter written by Mrs. Bestor to her daughter, Miss Frances J. Bestor, Leighton, Lawrence County, Alabama.

Thursday Noon, Montgomery, Ala., Oct. 24, 1844  
My Dear Daughter,

Tuesday morning your father, myself, babe, & Nancy took the stage and yesterday noon arrived at this place; we rode all night. Crossed the Cahaba at 7 o'clock and suped in Selma

at ten, and then started and crossed the Ala. river just at midnight. While crossing, the babe cried and I gave him paregoric, your Father dipped up river water in a spoon for me, babe slept until morning, and is the best young traveler I ever saw. We had a crowded stage and not a pleasant trip, but still got on with less inconvenience than I had expected.

I feel disappointed at not visiting my Parents, my relatives and you, but we have heard so much of Dr. Marshall's cures that we thought it best to try him first. Dr. Tunstel knows of many cures of his and Mr. Armstead knows the persons whose names are to his certificates. I cannot but hope that I may be cured. At times I doubt it and then again I hope. We can but try.

I wish you were at home to be a Mother to my little boys. I should have so much confidence in you, yet I do not wish you to shorten your visit to your good grandmother who is so kind to you, but would rather you pursue the Course you do, and read to her and wait on her and do all that you think will add to her happiness.

We are well, and I left all well at home... Your Father will return so soon as I am comfortably fixed in Augusta and when I wish to return home will come for me or send some friend. [Your sister] Maryann was writing you a letter when I left. Your Father wrote you on Sunday. Maryann's health is so much better that she is scarcely an invalid, and she worked very hard to get me fixed off. She takes good care of the boys and I feel confident that they will not need me, yet it was a hard struggle to leave them. We were not able to start last Saturday as we had intended... Our delay has brought us to this place in the midst of the Whig Convention and as babe and I are tired and your Father wished to see the doings today we remain until 1 o'clock tonight and will take the rail road tonight. Green sends no delegation, but your Father has pined on a badge and gone on in the crowd. I never saw so many folks. I put my veil on and look through the window. Ladies & gentlemen, town folks, country folks, Hosiers, Country crackers, muster negroes, and all, with all sorts of banners, from elegant to ridiculous, all for Clay. Hurrah, Hurrah, & Hurrah,

until last night I thought they were crazy. They are all at the depot now at the Speaking & barbecue. Mr. Stevens the orator from Georgia is to speak. Four fine bands of music, [including] the band that was at the springs. Two balls with mottoes and the names of the states, one larger than a carriage, the other as large as a common room if rounded like a globe, and suspended over a waggon, and turning when it goes on, so that you may read the mottoes very plainly. The prize banner is awarded to Taledega and is the most beautiful thing of the kind I ever saw. Every kind of devise some beautiful some ridiculous. One banner is bailing, with rope tassels and the marshal is elegantly dressed, riding a fine horse and wears a broad bailing scarf. One banner for home manufactures, and in the procession a beautiful spinning wheel about a foot and a half long suspended up high. Many cheers were given for the ladies and domestic industry. Daught would like it for her doll to spin on. I did not tell you that McLemore from Chambers & Childers from Taledega spoke last night at different stands, and after they stoped others spoke until about eleven, which caused the Hurrahs. Excuse bad writing as I have written a long letter home to the children and I am tired, but I thought you would be uneasy about me and it is a pleasure to write to you so I commenced a short one but have filled my paper. Write soon and direct to Augusta, Georgia. I will write so soon as I get there. This place is not larger than Tuscaloosa and I think not so pretty and the poorest country around and the meanest improvements I ever saw, I am disappointed in the place and the country. No elegant seats with shrubery, and no rural looking cottages. It does not look genteel.

Dr. Marshall thinks from the description your Father gave him of my sore that he can cure it in from two to five weeks.

One of the prettiest things I saw is a boat carriage filled with gentlemen dressed like sailors and beautifully curtained and banners flying from the windows and drawn by six fine horses all with small banners of stripes and stars fastened to the horses' shoulders.

Love to all, My dear child, good bye.

E. Bester

The Huntsville *Southern Advocate* in the issue of November

8, 1844 quotes the correspondent for the *Mobile Advertiser* as writing of the occasion:

“I have read many accounts of the great assemblages of the Whigs in other States, in 1840 and 1844, but nothing in point of numbers, in this State, have I before witnessed, nothing like the enthusiasm have I seen here, or read elsewhere. It was in truth a great day for the Whigs of Alabama, and long, long to be remembered!”

ALABAMA OPINION AND THE WHIG  
CUBAN POLICY, 1849-1851

by

*Durwood Long, Assistant Professor*

*Florida Southern College*

The expansionist fervor that gripped the United States in the eighteen forties prompted the acquisition of Oregon by negotiation, Texas by annexation, and additional territory in the southwest by war. Not satisfied with these prizes, some citizens agitated for the acquisition of Cuba as a fitting conclusion to the decade. The Polk Administration and many Democratic leaders attempted, without success, to purchase the island. Their efforts were balked; first, by Spain's refusal to sell, then, by the defeat of the Democratic presidential nominee in 1848 and the victory of the Whig, Zachary Taylor. The Whigs, in deciding upon a Cuban policy, were presented with the threat of internal party division over Cuba. Should the Whigs continue the aggressive policy of their Democratic predecessors, would the Northern commercial wing of the party remain loyal? On the other hand, how would the Southern slaveholding wing react to a reversal of policy? Were the Southern Whigs insistent on the acquisition of Cuba to the point of making it party principle; or would they reluctantly acquiesce to a policy contrary to their interest in slavery and Cuba?

Taylor and his close advisers decided to reverse the Democratic policy and to return to the "let-alone" policy of Jefferson, Monroe, and Adams. Efforts to purchase Cuba, pursued in Polk's presidency, were abandoned. Secretary of State John M. Clayton, with the President's approval, took the position that it would be insulting to renew the proposition after it had been rejected by Spain and that "should Spain desire to part with the island, a proposition for its cession to us should come from her."<sup>1</sup> Such a policy had the potential of being

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<sup>1</sup>G. T. Curtis, *Life of Daniel Webster* (New York, 1893), I, 213.

completely unsatisfactory to many pro-slavery advocates and expansionists. The latter talked of taking Cuba by force. They intended to "liberate" her, divide the island into four states, and annex them. The result would be the addition of at least eight pro-slavery senators and an additional number of pro-slavery representatives as insurance for the South's political predominance in the Congress.<sup>2</sup>

On which side did the Southern Whigs find themselves? If large slaveholders comprised a significant wing of the party, would they not object to Taylor's policy? As Southern and pro-slavery men, would they support filibustering or their party? This paper is an attempt to answer the question as it relates to one Southern state, Alabama, in the first period of heated agitation over slavery and national party loyalty.

The Whig administration had to deal with a number of issues involving Cuba in its four years of power. Almost immediately after his inauguration in 1849, President Zachary Taylor was presented with an incident involving Spain and Cuba. A Cuban patriot, Juan Francisco Rey, was kidnapped from American shores, presumably by Spanish authorities. In this matter, there was little ground for disagreement between the Alabama Whigs and Democrats. The Whig *Mobile Daily Advertiser*, the Democratic *Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette*, the *Huntsville Democrat*, and the Whig *Macon County Republican*, all united in demanding an investigation of the case. The Whig *Mobile Weekly Advertiser* stated that "the authorities of Cuba and their emissaries should be taught that they cannot violate with impunity American soil."<sup>3</sup>

An investigation by the American Consul in Havana, Robert Campbell, indicated that Rey had been unwillingly removed from the United States. Pressure by the American government soon won Rey's pardon. Alabama Whig opinion agreed that the government should also "demand reparation for violation of our soil."<sup>4</sup> The United States Government promptly revoked the papers of the Spanish Consul in New Orleans, Carlos de

<sup>2</sup>James Jeffery Roch, *By-Ways of War* (Boston, 1901), 6.

<sup>3</sup>*Mobile Weekly Advertiser*, July 9, 1849.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, August 31, 1849.



Espana, who was accused of the kidnapping. Taylor received wide acclaim for the government's action in the affair, as did Campbell.

Occurrences of more serious nature followed the Rey affair. Narcisso Lopez, after failing in an attempt to stage a revolution within Cuba in 1848, escaped to the United States to make plans for an invasion of the island. During the spring of 1849 Lopez joined a band of Cuban revolutionaries in New York. He visited a number of prominent Southerners including John C. Calhoun, who encouraged him with assurance that the United States would offer assistance to revolutionaries should a Cuban insurrection occur. Lopez also called on Jefferson Davis and Major Robert E. Lee, offering them in turn the command of the invasion forces. Both declined but encouraged Lopez and referred him to other leaders.<sup>5</sup>

During the early stages of Lopez' first expedition, rumors concerning the objectives were widespread. In Alabama, the newspapers contending most for the Cuban expedition and annexation were Democrats. The *Huntsville Democrat*, the *Eufaula Democrat*, the *Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette* and the *Mobile Register* all openly championed the cause of Cuban independence, by outside intervention, if necessary.

Informed of the outfitting of an invasion force, President Taylor issued an executive proclamation in August, 1849. The President warned against the movement saying that it was the duty of the United States government "to observe the faith of treaties and to prevent any aggression by our citizens upon the territories of the friendly nations." Furthermore, he warned citizens connected with such expeditions of the heavy penalties to which they were subjecting themselves. They were told bluntly not to expect governmental intervention on their behalf.<sup>6</sup>

In response to the proclamation and news that the United

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<sup>5</sup>For an extensive treatment of the Lopez expedition, see Jessie Wright Boyd, "Lopez Expeditions to Cuba," *Gulf State Historical Magazine*, March-May, 1905; and Robert G. Caldwell, *The Lopez Expeditions to Cuba, 1848-1851* (Princeton, 1915).

<sup>6</sup>James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (New York, 1897), VI, 2545.

States Navy had been instructed to prevent the planned invasion, the more extreme Democrats felt that the President's stand was in favor of the despotic rulers of Europe. The *Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette* said that the President, in effect, had placed the Naval vessels under the orders of the Captain General of Cuba. Stating that it was the first time "our gallant Navy has been subjected to such humiliation," the paper asked, "How much lower will this administration descend into the depths of infamy?"

Many Whig newspapers, however, were in sympathy with the proclamation and thought it was courageous and consistent of Taylor, especially so soon after the Rey affair. The *Mobile Weekly Advertiser* praised the President for "taking a courageous and faithful stand" in keeping the treaty of neutrality with Spain. It was thought that Taylor vindicated this country's honor by gaining relief in the Rey case while also engaged in suppressing an illegal invasion of Cuba.<sup>8</sup>

The United States Navy, acting under orders from the President, easily broke up the invasion by blockading the rendezvous point in the Gulf of Mexico. In New York, United States Marshals arrested Lopez and his companions and seized two vessels being outfitted for the adventure. The naval intervention near Mobile brought sharp criticism by the Democratic newspapers. The Whig paper in Mobile, the *Weekly Advertiser*, published by Charles C. Langdon, justified the action by calling the expedition "a lawless enterprise of some eight hundred desperadoes of all nations, pretending to call themselves American, to make war for the sake of plunder upon a people with whom we have no cause for quarrel."<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the *Eufaula Democrat* called the men "patriots who had been deceived by the administration."<sup>10</sup>

The *Mobile Daily Advertiser* published a pamphlet entitled "The Round Island Expedition—Defense of the Navy." It was

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<sup>7</sup>*Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette*, June 8, 1849.

<sup>8</sup>*Mobile Weekly Advertiser*, September 7, 1849.

<sup>9</sup>*Mobile Weekly Advertiser*, September 18, 1849.

<sup>10</sup>*Eufaula Democrat*, October 8, 1849.

a reprint of two articles appearing in the paper September 18 and 19, 1849. The Navy was defended on the grounds that it was acting under orders and as such deserved praise and not criticism. The Whig Administration was defended by asserting that it did only what was just and right in view of agreements with Spain and in recognition of that country's friendliness to the United States.

In November, the Democratic *Mobile Register* summed up its partisan feelings about Taylor's eight-month old government by saying, "Since March, the people have witnessed the living proof of utter incompetency, inexperience, and weakness of General Taylor as Executive of the United States." Furthermore, opined the editor, "he is not intellectually responsible."<sup>11</sup> The *Mobile Daily Advertiser*, however, extolled Taylor's greatness by comparing him to Thomas Jefferson.<sup>12</sup>

The successful interception of Lopez' first invasion force did not end the Whigs' difficulties with the filibustering movement. In the spring of 1850, Lopez began to organize a new expedition, directing his attention to Southern adventurers and leaders who were thought to be expansionist and particularly desirous of Cuba. Lopez sought and received help from Mississippi's Governor John A. Quitman. A regiment of men from Quitman's state volunteered for service under the command of Colonel W. J. Bush. Kentucky contributed a regiment, commanded by Colonel Theodore O'Hara. Louisiana, too, gave a regiment headed by Colonel Chatham Wheat.<sup>13</sup> The armed force successfully eluded the authorities and attacked Cuba May 18, 1850. After an initial success at the first point of invasion, Cardenas, the expedition was repulsed. Returning to Key West with the Spanish in close pursuit, Lopez' army disembarked safely. A few days afterward Lopez was arrested in Savannah, Ga., and charged with leading a hostile expedition in violation of neutrality laws.

The invasion was a source of great embarrassment to the

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<sup>11</sup>Mobile **Register**, November 13, 1849.

<sup>12</sup>Mobile **Daily Advertiser**, July 24, 1849.

<sup>13</sup>Andrew C. Quisenberry, **Lopez's Expeditions to Cuba**. (Louisville, Kentucky, 1906), 44-46.

Whig administration. The *Mobile Register* denounced the administration by its cryptic description: "A power of folly—attempting to prevent the annexation of Cuba to the United States; a power of luck—General Taylor; a power of weakness—John M. Clayton."<sup>14</sup> This opinion seemed to be the "party line" of the Alabama Democrats in defending the efforts to liberate Cuba. On the other hand, the Whigs were not so outspoken, either in condemning the filibusterers or in defending them. The Whig papers seemed to have adopted a policy of moderate reserve in which the administration was defended and sympathy asked for the Cubans.

In May, 1850, because of Spanish protests, President Taylor assigned additional Navy craft to the Gulf of Mexico and other Southern areas and charged them to prevent any other expedition. This act brought great criticism in Alabama, especially from the Democrats who believed that Cuba was ripe for a revolution but were frustrated with the combined efforts of Britain, Spain, and the United States to prevent it. Pessimistically, the *Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette* stated that the navies, other "stringent measures of the government and the severity of the laws will for a long time prevent a successful effort."<sup>15</sup> Another Democratic editor questioned the authority of the President to stop an expedition outside the limits of the United States.<sup>16</sup> The stationing of five United States Naval vessels in Cuban waters was thought to be humiliating by the Democrats, though some Alabama Whigs remained true to the administration and attempted to defend it.

Efforts of the Whig administration to win freedom for a number of would-be invaders captured by Spanish authorities in neutral or international waters were judged a reversal of policy by the Democrats. The *Huntsville Democrat* taunted: "the indignation of the people...has caused it [the administration] to back water, and to make amends somewhat for offences in this particular."<sup>17</sup> The Whigs defended the action

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<sup>14</sup>*Mobile Register*, January 26, 1850.

<sup>15</sup>*Montgomery Advertiser and State Gazette*, May 29, 1850.

<sup>16</sup>*Huntsville Democrat*, May 30, 1850.

<sup>17</sup>*Huntsville Democrat*, June 27, 1850.

as justifiable, stating that it did not constitute an about face since the prisoners were seized in neutral waters. The State Department sent a special commission to Cuba to negotiate for the prisoners' release.<sup>18</sup> Secretary Clayton warned the Captain-General "that if he unjustly shed one drop of American blood ... it might cost the countries a sanguinary war."<sup>19</sup> The Alabama Whig newspapers lauded Clayton's firmness as did the Democratic organs. The latter adopted an "I told you so" attitude. The Huntsville *Democrat*, for example, stated that Clayton had been scared into the correct position by public opinion.<sup>20</sup> Clayton's tone did not seem to frighten the Spanish, however, and they continued to hold the prisoners. The Alabama Democrats made fun of the Secretary's imperious demands after receiving news that two prisoners were sentenced to death. The Montgomery *Advertiser* asked, "What has become of that fire-eating letter ... warning that if one drop of blood of those prisoners was shed by Cuba it might cost the two countries a bloody war? Bah!"<sup>21</sup>

During the controversy over the invasion and the prisoners, many Democratic newspapers charged President Taylor with deliberately betraying his countrymen into the hands of the Captain-General of Cuba. The Huntsville *Democrat* condemned the President's conduct as "unstatesmanlike and indignant in the extreme."<sup>22</sup> Another Democratic newspaper, the Montgomery *Advertiser and State Gazette*, voiced the opinion that opposition to the Cuban filibustering expedition in the North developed because they had not solved the problem of making Cuba free-soil. The editor said with bitterness, that whenever the Northerners determined how to make Cuba free soil, "war vessels will not be in the way" to prevent it.<sup>23</sup>

President Taylor's death in July, 1850, did not cause any change in the Cuban policy. Millard Fillmore became President

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<sup>18</sup>House Executive Document, No. 83, 33 Congress, 1 session, (Washington, 1853) p. 45.

<sup>19</sup>Caldwell, *op. cit.*, 80

<sup>20</sup>Huntsville *Democrat*, June 27, 1850.

<sup>21</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser and State Gazette*, September 4, 1850.

<sup>22</sup>Huntsville *Democrat*, June 20, 1850.

<sup>23</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser and State Gazette*, April 2, 1850.



and Secretary of State Clayton was succeeded by Daniel Webster.<sup>24</sup> Continuing the peaceful negotiations with Spain, Webster in a conciliatory manner permitted Spain to keep the two captured vessels in return for the prisoners' release. They were released in November and the Whigs claimed credit for their honorable and humanitarian action, heaping praise upon Fillmore and Webster.

Lopez, even while under indictment for his second expedition, began preparation for a third invasion. After being freed from the government's charges, Lopez made plans to launch his attack sometime in 1851. News of the illegal activity reached Washington. On April 25, 1851, President Fillmore issued an Executive Proclamation as a warning to the filibusterers. The language and tone of the proclamation was more severe than the one of the preceding year. Regarding such expeditions as "adventures for plunder and robbery," the President pronounced the "condemnation of the civilized world," and stated that such expeditions were derogatory to the character of our country and expressly prohibited by United States laws. Fillmore warned that any persons participating in the invasion efforts would "forfeit their claim to the protection of this Government or any interference on their behalf, no matter to what extremities they may be reduced in consequence of their illegal conduct."<sup>25</sup>

Alabamians responded to the proclamation according to their politics. The Whigs of Mobile, headed by C. C. Langdon, editor of the *Mobile Daily Advertiser* and former mayor of Mobile, accepted it as a "fair and honest document."<sup>26</sup> The Democrats in Alabama condemned the President's action. One Democratic newspaper compared the proclamation to a manifesto from the autocratic country of Russia or Austria. The editor pointed out that "it would seem from the document that it is a monstrous crime to aid an oppressed people in throwing off the yoke of despotism."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Caldwell, *op. cit.*, 82, relates that the Spanish scholars Torrente and Portell Vila have written that if Clayton had remained Secretary of State there would have been war between the countries.

<sup>25</sup>James D. Richardson, *op. cit.*, VI, 2647.

<sup>26</sup>*Mobile Daily Advertiser*, May 5, 1851.

<sup>27</sup>Huntsville *Democrat*, May 7, 1851.



Despite interferences by the government and the warnings of the proclamation, Lopez's invasion force left New Orleans on August 3 bound for Cuba. The United States Collector of Customs permitted the ships to sail amid cheers of enthusiastic supporters. Shortly afterward, on August 10, the expedition, Lopez's third, landed in Cuba and fought its way inland.

On August 9, a public meeting was held in Montgomery in the interest of Cuban independence and in support of Lopez. Even the *Macon County Republican*, a staunch Whig paper, supported the meeting and adopted such a pro-Cuban independence position that it could ask the Democrats, "Where are you, you 'fire-eaters'?" The *Republican* taunted the "fire-eating" Democrats by asking why so few of them had joined the Cuban expedition if they wanted to show their fire. The editor of the *Democratic Spirit of the South*, of Eufaula, replied that he and his Democratic friends were "constant in earnestly desiring that Cuba would succeed in throwing off the Spanish yoke," but that there was some doubt about the sincerity of the Whig's sudden endorsement of Lopez.<sup>28</sup> Daniel Sayre, editor of the *Republican*, as if to prove his sincerity, wrote an editorial heartily supporting the effort to liberate Cuba, saying, "Wherever liberty raises its standard, there will be the sympathies of the American people." While pointing out that the government was obligated to do "its sworn duties," the editors stated their support to the patriots of Cuba, promising to give "all the aid and comfort that we can."<sup>29</sup> The Whig *Daily Advertiser* in Mobile was much less enthusiastic and carried only reported facts about the expedition.<sup>30</sup>

In addition to the oral support and the journalistic endorsement for the expedition, there were many Alabamians who volunteered to reinforce the invaders. The *Huntsville Democrat* carried an editorial which revealed that "citizens are flocking to the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, awaiting the first good opportunity to sail for Cuba." The editor wished them well and the best of fortune in escaping from the watchdogs of the three

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<sup>28</sup>Eufaula *Spirit of the South*, August 12, 1851.

<sup>29</sup>Macon County *Republican*, August 14, 1851.

<sup>30</sup>Mobile *Daily Advertiser*, August 3-28, 1851.

navies of the United States, France, and England plus the despotic ships of Spain.<sup>31</sup> Men from Macon and Dallas Counties went to Montgomery to organize a unit to assist Lopez. The Huntsville *Democrat* trusted Heaven to bless them in their efforts and even the Whig editor of the *Macon County Republican* thought the volunteers "clever, intelligent, worthy young men," and wished them "every success in their perilous undertaking."<sup>32</sup>

Other Alabama towns and counties followed the Montgomery example and held public meetings in the interest of Cuba. Citizens in Tuskegee were summoned for a meeting on August 12. Daniel Sayre, editor of the *Macon County Republican*, was on the resolutions committee. Resolutions which firmly supported Cuban independence were drawn up and approved. The citizens also promised that Macon County would contribute her share of men and moral support.<sup>33</sup> Huntsville's citizens met and passed similar resolutions. On August 22 Mobile held a public meeting. Whigs and Democrats alike participated. In deference to the Whig position, resolutions were endorsed promising aid to the Cuban independence movement "consistent with the laws of the United States."<sup>34</sup> The Whig Huntsville *Southern Advocate* satirically wondered how far one could go in helping the independence efforts without breaking the law.<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, Lopez's army had been scattered and Lopez driven into the mountains. Many of the Americans were captured or killed in battle. Of those captured, fifty-one Americans were quickly executed by the Spanish authorities in Cuba. More than one-hundred others were sent to Spain as prisoners. These events caused many newspapers to devote entire issues to the Cuban question. The *Alabama Journal*, Huntsville *Democrat*, *Spirit of the South*, and the Tuscaloosa *Crystal Fountain*, all condemned the barbarous executions. Much of the news space was given to descriptions of the brutal executions of the American adventurers and the desecrations of their re-

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<sup>31</sup>Huntsville *Democrat*, September 4, 1851.

<sup>32</sup>Macon County *Republican*, August 21, 1851.

<sup>33</sup>Macon County *Republican*, August 14, 1851.

<sup>34</sup>Mobile *Daily Advertiser*, August 25, 1851.

<sup>35</sup>Huntsville *Southern Advocate*, August 27, 1851.

mains. The Democratic Tuscaloosa *Crystal Fountain*, warned Spain that "the spirit of the country will be awakened... to a fierceness and passion" which cannot be stopped by the government.<sup>36</sup> The executions had a definite effect towards influencing some who had been against the expeditions to make an about-face in their sympathies. Many Whig newspapers, however, were mild in their editorials though they reported the barbarous executions. The Mobile *Daily Advertiser* published a poem entitled, "An Appeal for Cuba", on August 29, in which Cuba was called "*our beautiful isle*" and in which vengeance against Spain was promised.<sup>37</sup>

When news arrived that Lopez was surrounded by the Spanish, Alabamians were "astonished and grieved."<sup>38</sup> The opinion was that Lopez's only hope lay in the people of Cuba. A Whig editor warned that "Creoles (native Cubans) must redeem their promise, or popular interest in Cuban struggles will slacken wonderfully—enthusiasm in their behalf will be both a cheap and a rare article."<sup>39</sup> The *Spirit of the South*, in response to Whig accusation that the Democratic newspapers were printing false reports on Cuba, unsuccessfully tried to prove that Lopez was receiving help from the Cuban people. Saying that "the people (Cuban) are up in force" and that the "Spanish statements that the people had not joined Lopez, are not correct," the *Spirit of the South* attempted to whip up enthusiasm for Cuban independence.<sup>40</sup> The *Crystal Fountain* gave aid to the Eufaula paper's efforts by stating that five hundred native Cubans had joined Lopez.<sup>41</sup> Fuller information indicated that there was little basis for these optimistic reports.

In response to a Whig editorial asking the government to stop any further expeditions from joining the filibusterers, one Democratic editor wrote, "Now here is an appeal to the American government to exert all its power to prevent American citizens from flying to the aid of the oppressed and down-

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<sup>36</sup>Tuscaloosa *Crystal Fountain*, August 28, 1851.

<sup>37</sup>Mobile *Daily Advertiser*, August 29, 1851.

<sup>38</sup>*Spirit of the South*, September 9, 1851.

<sup>39</sup>Mobile *Daily Advertiser*, August 23, 1851.

<sup>40</sup>Eufaula *Spirit of the South*, August 28, 1851.

<sup>41</sup>Tuscaloosa *Crystal Fountain*, September 2, 1851.

trodden sons of Cuba." The editor thought it audacious to ask a democratic government "to aid the Spanish government in keeping the iron heel of despotism upon the necks of its long suffering people." The writer asked the reader to reflect on what would have happened if the French had been believers in such a doctrine in the Revolution of the colonies—"our patriot fathers would have struggled in vain against the British government." The editor hoped for a speedy triumph, "...both over the Spanish government and its Whig allies here."<sup>42</sup>

The Whigs in Alabama, however, could not justifiably be called allies of the Spanish government. Though they were not too loud in supporting a move to send more American help, many of them hoped that the Cubans would come to the rescue of Lopez and that Cuban independence would be achieved. The *Alabama Journal*, of Whig persuasion, said that "If the Cubans do not join him (Lopez) and sustain him now, it is evident that they neither deserve or desire freedom, and we trust that they may be let alone to bear the yoke of servitude for which they alone are fitted." The editor hoped that no other gallant Americans would be deceived to be "trapped for certain murder in the cause of men who are born serfs, and who, it may appear, deserve no other fate." The editor closed his column of warning with the following poem:

"May their names be a mock-word

May men of all lands

Laugh out with a scorn that will  
ring to the poles—

May each sword that the cowards  
let fall from their hands

Be forged into fetters to enter their souls."

and concluded, "The blood of good men should no longer be squandered in such a cause and for such a people."<sup>43</sup>

Lopez was chased into the interior, where, without the support of the Cuban people, he was captured on August 31,

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<sup>42</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser and State Gazette*, August 31, 1851.

<sup>43</sup>*Alabama Journal*, August 27, 1851.

1851. The day following, he was executed by the garrote.<sup>44</sup> The capture of the Americans with Lopez and the leader's execution brought forth bitter words from the people everywhere in Alabama. The *Spirit of the South* said that the results "show that no reliance is to be placed on the cooperation of the Cubans themselves, who might by a timely and concerted effort, have secured their independence." The editor felt that they had miserably failed the gallant Lopez but that their behavior was "a painful illustration of the effects of a long continued submission, breaking the spirits and dampening the courage of a people." The Democratic editor bitterly exclaimed the hope that no more American blood would be shed "in a vain effort to secure for them their liberty, which they seem to have neither the intelligence to comprehend, nor the spirit to win."<sup>45</sup> Although news of the execution was featured, the Whig Mobile *Daily Advertiser's* editorial columns were silent. Neither did the Whig *Alabama Journal* comment on the execution.

The Whigs in Alabama seemed to have reverted to their position of non-intervention. Upon the failure of Lopez, the Whig editors sharply criticized the lack of support by the Cuban people. The *Macon County Republican* made the statement that it didn't "believe in fighting for any people that won't fight for themselves." The editor stated that he had previously supported the movement in "the commencement of the Cuban excitement," but that it was because the impression was made that Cuba was already in a revolution of the people. That writer said, "not fifty Cubans . . . joined Lopez . . ., proving that the Cubans do not desire liberty, or that they are too cowardly to fight for it, or that the Spanish government is not so tyrannical and oppressive as we have been led to believe." The position of the paper was that whenever Cuba determined to shake off the Spanish yoke, and make a respectable effort, the paper was willing to second that effort. The editor concluded, however, in saying that "We concur in the opinion that if Cuba

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<sup>44</sup>A full account of the capture and execution of Lopez may be found in Caldwell, *op. cit.*, 111-112, the basis of which is the private records of the Captain-General of Cuba, Concha. A detailed report of the execution is given in the New York *Tribune*, September 9, 1851, and much may be found in Boyd, *op. cit.*, 14-15.

<sup>45</sup>Eufaula *Spirit of the South*, September 9, 1851.



should achieve her independence; and apply for admission into the Union, the feeling in favor of annexation would be unanimous, both North and South."<sup>46</sup> The *Mobile Advertiser* told of the failure of the Creoles in supporting Lopez, and said, "They have not, to one extent offered help. The test came . . . (and) they failed to qualify for freedom."<sup>47</sup> The *Spirit of the South*, when telling of the loss of Colonel Downman, an Alabamian, who was among Lopez's volunteers, said, "it is painful to think of the vast amount of valor and heroism wasted on the Cuban expedition."<sup>48</sup>

Anger and disappointment over Lopez's failure and the execution of the Americans were turned against A. F. Owen, United States Consul in Havana. The Democrats charged that he made no attempt to save the Americans from execution while the Whigs generally pleaded for at least a fair hearing for Owen. Owen explained that he went to see the Captain-General on the prisoners's behalf but was answered in the language of Fillmore's proclamation of the previous spring. The *Spirit of the South* stated that Owen had removed the odium from himself and placed it where it belonged, on the administration itself. The Whig *Mobile Daily Advertiser* recommended public sympathy for Owen.

Fillmore reacted to the expedition very unfavorably in the eyes of the Democrats. One of the first things done by him was the removal of the Collector of the Port of New Orleans, William Freret, and the replacement of United States Surveyor Colonel Stille on the grounds that they permitted violation of the federal law. This action was harshly criticized by the Democratic *Mobile Register* but defended by the Whig *Daily Advertiser*: "The President has done his duty in the affair nobly and fearlessly, and will receive the thanks of all who know how to prize liberty regulated by law."<sup>49</sup> Owen was removed in October to the satisfaction of Alabama Whigs and Democrats alike. The President, in his Second Annual Message, reviewed the facts of the expedition and reemphasized his determination that

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<sup>46</sup>*Macon County Republican*, September 18, 1851.

<sup>47</sup>*Mobile Daily Advertiser*, September 7, 1851.

<sup>48</sup>*Eufaula Spirit of the South*, September 23, 1851.

<sup>49</sup>*Mobile Daily Advertiser*, September 12, 1851.



the laws of neutrality be kept. He reiterated the administration's view concerning anyone who was captured in such adventures. He also recommended that Congress inquire into the amount of loss suffered by Spanish residents at the hands of the mobs in New Orleans and Key West.<sup>50</sup>

Alabama's view on the measure calling for payment for the destroyed Spanish property was expressed by Alabama's Senator Jeremiah Clemens. In debate, Clemens stated that he wished the privilege of voting against the measure because the Spanish store-keepers "had aggravated the occasion by showing exultation over the execution of fifty or more Americans." The Alabama Senator was glad to see that American pride would not permit such Spanish gloating. In concluding, he said, "if they get redress, let them get it where an American would get it,"<sup>51</sup> meaning in the courts. The people of Alabama were pleased with Clemens' view on the subject, even the Whigs. The measure, however, carried and \$25,000 was appropriated for payment.<sup>52</sup> Clemens presented to Congress on January 7, 1852, a petition asking for authorization for the President to provide transportation home for the American prisoners who had been set free in Madrid. This move by the Alabama Senator brought the endorsement of both parties in his state.

Another good indication of public opinion in Alabama at the end of the Lopez expeditions was a joint resolution passed by the General Assembly of Alabama in January, 1852. The resolution called for non-intervention and was submitted by Clemens to the National Congress. The measure resolved to condemn any proposal of intervention. The oppressed were reminded by the measure that "who would be free, themselves must strike the first blow." The resolution was highly acclaimed in Alabama and was said to have been the true sentiment of the state. Even the *Spirit of the South* was pleased with it.

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<sup>50</sup>Richardson, *op. cit.*, VI, 2649-2675.

<sup>51</sup>Congressional Globe, 32nd Cong., 1st Sess., vol 21, (Washington, 1852) 2441.

<sup>52</sup>Bemis, *A Diplomatic History of the United States*, Fourth Ed., (New York, 1961), 317.

The over-all results of the Lopez expedition in brief were a dampening of the plans for filibustering, the immediate victory of the straightforward Whig administration, and the awakening of Spain to the danger with which she was confronted. Many Southerners, particularly Democrats, still desired Cuba, but not so strongly as before. Temporarily, filibustering was abandoned.

From this study of Alabama Whigs and the policy of neutrality towards Cuba, it is also possible to verify that the Southern Whigs were mildly opposed to the acquisition of Cuba. A letter written to the *Charleston Mercury*, August, 1851, by Ambrosia Jose Gonzales, one of Lopez's friends and supporters, described the changing views of John C. Calhoun and "other Senators from the South." Calhoun had given Lopez much encouragement in the spring of 1849 but as the agitation over the Wilmot Proviso increased, Calhoun's "views underwent a visible change." According to Gonzales, Calhoun felt "that the Cuba question would draw the minds of the people from an internal to an external issue and would threaten to divide them even more."<sup>53</sup> Articles in *De Bow's Review* by De Bow<sup>54</sup> and W. J. Sykes warned against the spirit of aggression. The latter gave Southern arguments against annexation of Cuba by asserting that Cuba could not become a slave market since she had sufficient slaves, that the island would offer commercial rivalry to the Gulf States and that the slavery controversy would be worsened and the North would attempt to take Canada.<sup>55</sup> The Alabama Whigs shared these views, particularly in the midst of political difficulties threatening to disrupt the parties and the Union.

Throughout the three years of controversy over issues related to efforts to take Cuba, the Alabama Whigs and Democrats were fairly consistent. The Whigs followed the neutrality policy laid down by the administration and made sincere efforts

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<sup>53</sup>Charleston *Mercury*, August 24, 1851, quoted by Boyd, *op. cit.*, 5.

<sup>54</sup>J.D.B. De Bow, "The Late Cuba Expedition," *De Bow's Review*, IX, (New Orleans, 1850), 164.

<sup>55</sup>W. J. Sykes, "Cuba and the United States," *De Bow's Review*, XIV, (New Orleans, 1853) 417.

to defend it. According to one historian of the Whig party in the South, "the economic and political interests of the southern Whigs were the 'special interests' of the slavocracy."<sup>56</sup> An Alabama newspaper of the period stated that somewhere between three-fourths and seven-eighths of the slaves in the South were owned by Whigs.<sup>57</sup> Though at least one historian has cast doubts upon these assertions, they have been generally accepted.<sup>58</sup> If they are true, either the Alabama Whigs were exceptions to the rule or the Southern Whigs, as "special interests of the slaveocracy," did not agitate for the acquisition of Cuba. The Alabama Whigs, as reflected by their spokesmen, were more loyal to political and party principle than to immediate economic interests. The alternative is to suggest that the spokesmen of the Alabama Whigs represented the commercial wing of the party and not the slaveholding faction. Support to the latter view is given by the fact that the Whigs in Alabama's Black Belt, the area where the greatest number of slaves were held, were less loyal to the administration's policy on Cuba than the commercial Mobile Whigs. This interpretation also agrees with the thesis that the Alabama Whig party "was controlled by the commercial and banking interests and supported by the planters who were economically dependent on banking and commercial facilities."<sup>59</sup>

The Alabama Democrats were also consistent to the expansionist spirit of their party which had characterized Polk's administration. The Democrats wanted Cuba and were not too choosy about the method used to obtain it. Did this desire represent the small farmers' fear of abolition of slavery in Cuba and its spread to the South? Or did it represent the fact that the leadership of the Alabama Democratic Party was in the hands of the large slaveholders? Neither seems to explain the Alabama politics of this period. More plausible is the interpre-

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<sup>56</sup>A. C. Cole, *The Whig Party in the South* (Washington, 1913), 69.

<sup>57</sup>Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, September 2, 1850.

<sup>58</sup>Charles G. Sellers, Jr., "Who Were the Southern Whigs?" *American Historical Review*, LIX (January, 1954), 341-346; See also Grady McWhiney, *Journal of Southern History*, XXIII (November, 1957), 510-528.

<sup>59</sup>Sellers, *op. cit.*, 346.

tation which suggests the traditional expansionist spirit of the Democratic Party beginning with Thomas Jefferson, and continued under Andrew Jackson and James K. Polk. The Alabama Democrats were heirs of that tradition and that factor explains more than any other the strong support of expansionism in North Alabama and other strongholds of small farmers. Both parties in Alabama, Whigs and Democrats, were consistent to their traditional political policies.

COLONEL JAMES M. WHITEHEAD  
AGRARIAN EDITOR OF THE DEEP SOUTH

by

*William Warren Rogers*

*Florida State University*

One of the most colorful chapters in the history of American journalism was that written by the Populist newspapers of the rural South and Midwest in the 1890's. In the South these papers challenged the supremacy of the long entrenched Democratic journals. They more than held their own for a decade of furious and acrimonious debate over the merits of electoral reform, increased agricultural legislation, and free silver. These Populist papers styled themselves the Reform Press and were usually weeklies published in small county seat towns. They varied from profitable journals with extensive circulation lists to temporary campaign organs lasting hardly more than a month. No southern state had a more vocal group of papers and editors than Alabama, where at least one hundred journals asked and gave no quarter to their Democratic rivals.<sup>1</sup>

Easily the most bombastic of Alabama's reform papers was the Greenville *Living Truth*, edited by Colonel James M. Whitehead. This iconoclastic and versatile editor was the prototype of the southern itinerant newspaperman, and his career is a study of a vanished species. He was born around 1840 in Dale County, Alabama. As a young man he had limited economic opportunities but soon improved his position by moving to the small South Alabama town of Greenville in Butler County. Here he became a printer's devil, and within a few years acquired a wife, was promoted to editor, read law, and was admitted to the bar.<sup>2</sup> Before the Civil War he moved from Greenville and established the first newspaper in Dale County, the

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<sup>1</sup>See Charles Grayson Summersell, "Kolb and the Populist Revolt as Viewed by Newspapers," *The Alabama Historical Quarterly*, XIX (Fall and Winter, 1957), 375-394; and William Warren Rogers, "Alabama's Reform Press: Militant Spokesman for Agrarian Revolt," *Agricultural History*, XXXIV (April, 1960), 62-70.

<sup>2</sup>Monroeville *Monroe Journal*, January 5, 1885.



Newton *Times*. Later he moved it to Fort Gaines, Georgia, where it was renamed the *Spirit of the Age*. Whitehead continued as editor until the summer of 1859.<sup>3</sup>

He served in the Confederate Army, lost a leg at Gaines Mill, Virginia, in 1862, and as he said "...sacrificed about as much as the best of you."<sup>4</sup> Whitehead's actual rank of private was elevated to that of colonel in the postwar years, and he became widely known by this title. After the war he returned to Butler County and was elected County Solicitor. Yet he was unable to remain away from journalism, and he served as editor of James B. Stanley's *Greenville Advocate* from 1867 to 1872.<sup>5</sup> By 1873 he had his own newspaper, the short-lived *Greenville Independent Thinker*. His fourteen year old son acted as foreman and pressman.<sup>6</sup> Whitehead maintained his interest in politics and served as chairman of the Butler County Democratic Executive Committee throughout the 1870's. In 1874 he was a candidate and barely missed being nominated for Congress from the Second District.<sup>7</sup>

Yet Whitehead was too much of an independent spirit to accept the conservative rule of the Democrats and soon began to criticize their regime. In 1882 he worked for the *Greenville Echo*,<sup>8</sup> but later that year moved to Brewton in Escambia County and campaigned for the Greenback-Independent ticket.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the year he moved once more, this time to the state capital at Montgomery. Here he established the *National Independent* and denounced the Democrats by stating his refusal "...to walk blindly in the tread-mill of their crooked and cranky machine..."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Troy *Messenger*, June 15, 1871, quoting *Greenville Advocate*.

<sup>4</sup>Ozark *Banner*, April 20, 1893, quoting *Greenville Living Truth*. See Index Card, Military Records Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>5</sup>*Greenville Advocate*, August 1, 1867; January 18, 1872.

<sup>6</sup>*Selma Southern Argus*, January 24, 1873.

<sup>7</sup>*Greenville Advocate*, September 19, 1874; June 19, 1880.

<sup>8</sup>John Buckner Little, *The History of Butler County, Alabama, From 1815 to 1885* (Cincinnati: Elm Street Printing Company, 1885), 202-203.

<sup>9</sup>Troy *Enquirer*, August 5, 1882.

<sup>10</sup>Montgomery *National Independent*, December 31, 1882.



By the early 1880's the peripatetic Whitehead had broken completely with the Democratic Party. In 1884 he ran as an Independent against Democratic Congressman Hilary A. Herbert. The Colonel was an effective and colorful campaigner. When Herbert declined his proposal for a joint debate, Whitehead announced that instead of delivering speeches he would entertain his audiences by singing songs.<sup>11</sup> He made a surprisingly strong showing and always maintained that he had been illegally counted out. His opponents called him an unconfessed Republican.<sup>12</sup>

Settling in Montgomery, Whitehead embarked on a series of newspaper ventures. He edited successively, but unsuccessfully, *The Blade*, *The Independent*, and *The Morning Thought*. This latter paper was declared to be both "unsecular and non-partisan" by one newspaper<sup>13</sup> and "newsy and spicy" showing evidence of being "a lively 'kicker,'" by another.<sup>14</sup> It began as a daily but was soon abandoned for a tri-weekly, also published at Montgomery, entitled *The Morning Tribune*. This paper contained the Colonel's usual "sparkling thought" and a contemporary believed that, despite Whitehead's obvious fickleness in selecting names for his publications, he was a brilliant journalist.<sup>15</sup>

Unsuccessful in Alabama, Whitehead moved to Algiers, Louisiana, in 1885 and began editing a paper called *The Advertiser*.<sup>16</sup> A failure here, Whitehead returned to Butler County and settled at Georgiana in the lower part of the county. Once more he turned to journalism, this time editing a paper named *The Progressive Age*. In the Farmers' Alliance Whitehead found a cause worthy of his undivided abilities, which even

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<sup>11</sup>Monroeville **Monroe Journal**, September 22, 1884.

<sup>12</sup>Brewton **Banner**, February 5, 1885; Ozark **Banner**, April 20, 1893, quoting Greenville **Living Truth**. See also Carey Vitallis Stabler, "The Career of Hilary Abner Herbert," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Alabama, 1932, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup>Brewton **Banner**, February 28, 1884.

<sup>14</sup>Troy **Enquirer**, February 16, 1884.

<sup>15</sup>Brewton **Banner**, June 5, 1884.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, January 22, 1885.

his enemies admitted were crude but forceful.<sup>17</sup> His paper soon became the official organ of the county Alliance. In 1890 the paper was sold to the State Alliance Exchange and its press was moved to Montgomery to be used for publishing a state organ under the direction of the Alliance Board of Publication.<sup>18</sup> Whitehead remained in Georgiana and in 1891 began editing the *Living Truth*, which he shortly moved to Greenville.<sup>19</sup>

After years of erratic wandering, Whitehead finally found his proper niche with the *Living Truth*. As a writer he was frequently ungrammatical. His style was occasionally bitter and cynical, but more often he relied on ridicule and his ability to make his opponents appear ludicrous. His writing had something of a universal, even if outlandish, truth about it. Patrons of the *Living Truth* approved the editor's denunciation of people who thought "...farmers are a lazy set of gallinippers, who do nothing but eat watermelons and peaches, and plot against the politicians."<sup>20</sup> Of that well known type, the city sophisticate, Whitehead wrote:

One of these city dudes, his hair parted in the middle, a cigarette in one corner of his mouth, a rattan cane in his hand, is a rare bird; he can tell a farmer more about his business than he knows himself, and the farmer can't hold him a candle managing the farm, if you only let him hug the shady side of the court house during dog days. If he was a farmer he would work like blue blazes and stay out of politics. As he isn't he doesn't.<sup>21</sup>

Caution was inconceivable to the Colonel since it represented inaction rather than action. As the Farmers' Alliance became increasingly political and finally emerged as the Populist Party, Whitehead was in the vanguard of the movement. As an outright Populist, he never approved of Alabama's "Jeffer-

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<sup>17</sup>Monroeville *Monroe Journal*, January 5, 1885.

<sup>18</sup>Evergreen Star, February 13, 1890. The newly established state paper was the *Alliance Herald* and lasted from February 1890 to July 1894.

<sup>19</sup>Geneva *Record*, May 6, 1891; Troy *Messenger*, May 7, 1891.

<sup>20</sup>Brewton *Standard Guage*, July 30, 1891, quoting Greenville *Living Truth*.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

sonians," who were moderate members of the People's Party. Jeffersonians, Whitehead urged, should disband and enter either the Democratic or the People's Party since "There is no longer any room in this state for a second fiddle faction party."<sup>22</sup>

Whitehead indiscriminately opposed anyone who did not subscribe to his views. He declared that Democratic Governor Thomas G. Jones had been elected in 1892 as the result of fraudulent votes illegally cast and counted. This made Jones governor "...of a lot of ballot-box thieves, and this is the whole of it."<sup>23</sup> When fellow reformers were not diligent enough to satisfy Whitehead, he breathed fire on them as well. Thus, he did not hesitate to call Reuben F. Kolb, the state's foremost Populist figure, a man whose "...capacity as an all around prevaricator is limited only by the scope of his imagination—and this is as boundless as space itself."<sup>24</sup> On another occasion Whitehead accused Frank Baltzell, editor of the Populist Montgomery *Alliance Herald*, of selling out to the Democrats.<sup>25</sup>

Although none of the reform editors might properly be described as conservative, most were more temperate than Whitehead. I. L. Brock, Populist editor of the Centre *Cherokee Sentinel*, commented that if Whitehead were "...in Heaven he would soon get out of joint there and raise his objections to the arrangements [sic]."<sup>26</sup> Another time Brock observed, "No one believes that Whitehead is any more honest than other honest men; but we give him credit for being more stubborn than any other stubborn man."<sup>27</sup>

Opposition to Whitehead took a violent as well as a verbal form. An 1884 campaign speech in Covington County so of-

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<sup>22</sup>Whitehead's position was quoted and commented on in Democratic papers. See Prattville *Progress*, November 3, 1893; Union Springs *Herald*, November 15, 1893.

<sup>23</sup>Ozark *Banner*, August 18, 1892, quoting Greenville *Living Truth*.

<sup>24</sup>Ozark *Free Press*, October 15, 1896, quoting Greenville *Living Truth*.

<sup>25</sup>Troy *Jeffersonian*, September 14, 1894; Hayneville *Citizen Examiner*, March 28, 1895.

<sup>26</sup>Centre *Cherokee Sentinel*, November 30, 1893.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, May 10, 1894.

fended one listener that a fight resulted in which the one-legged Colonel was severely beaten. In 1892 his office was broken into and the type was scattered and upset.<sup>29</sup> Whitehead had his residence and printing office in the upstairs part of a brick cotton warehouse. In 1893 a fire broke out destroying his furniture, but the press and equipment were saved. It was never determined whether the fire was an accident or the work of an incendiary.<sup>30</sup>

An admitted extremist on many issues, Whitehead was never an unreasoning one, and, moreover, had the ability to compromise when necessary. For example, he praised Democratic Senator John Tyler Morgan for attacking the administration of Grover Cleveland.<sup>31</sup> In the 1896 state elections he accepted fusion with the Republicans in a futile attempt to defeat the Democrats.<sup>32</sup>

His ability was recognized when he was elected President of the Alabama Reform Press Association in 1895.<sup>33</sup> The organization was not effective because of the impermanence of the papers that made it up.<sup>34</sup> While other reform papers failed because of poor administration, Whitehead's wide experience enabled him to make the *Living Truth* a profitable endeavor. Local merchants advertised in the paper and it enjoyed a wide circulation. It was said that if all his delinquent subscribers paid up, the Colonel could retire from business.<sup>35</sup> After 1896 the Populists declined on both the national and state level. As other reform papers closed, the *Living Truth* was at the height of its prosperity. For a brief period Whitehead published an edition of his paper in Birmingham as well as Greenville.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Ozark **Banner**, September 1, 1892, quoting Montgomery **Alliance Herald**.

<sup>30</sup>Greenville **Advocate**, November 29, 1893.

<sup>31</sup>Montgomery **Advertiser**, November 12, 1893.

<sup>32</sup>Talladega **News-Reporter**, January 25, 1896, quoting Eufaula **Times**; Birmingham **People's Weekly Tribune**, March 26, 1896.

<sup>33</sup>Ozark **Banner-Advertiser**, February 21, 1895.

<sup>34</sup>Rogers, "Alabama's Reform Press," 69.

<sup>35</sup>Ozark **Banner-Advertiser**, May 9, 1895.

<sup>36</sup>Montgomery **Alabama Monitor**, November 13, 1896.

The vitriolic Whitehead was a force in Alabama journalism and politics. He served in important capacities in the statewide People's Party organization, and his oratorical abilities were such that he had difficulty finding Democrats willing to debate with him.<sup>37</sup> He continued editing the *Living Truth* until shortly before his death in 1898.<sup>38</sup> To the end his editorials retained their defiant note and he continued to decry political corruption and bossism. As an observed and chronicler of his fellow men, Whitehead had few peers. In an accurate self-appraisal he once wrote, "...if there is a natural bred and born independent in the state of Alabama ... I am one."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Carrollton *Alabama Alliance News*, June 30, 1896, quoting Sheffield *Reaper*.

<sup>38</sup>Montgomery *Advertiser*, August 31, 1898. The *Living Truth* was taken over by an anti-Populist named Abe Lehman. See Rhoda Coleman Ellison, *History and Bibliography of Alabama Newspapers in the Nineteenth Century* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1954), 73.

<sup>39</sup>Ozark *Banner*, April 20, 1893, quoting Greenville *Living Truth*.

## 1763—THE FORGOTTEN BICENTENNIAL

An Historiographic Commentary

*by**Robert R. Rea, Professor of History**Auburn University*

It is most appropriate that in the year 1963, members of the Alabama legislature and zealous citizens of the Mobile area should have raised the ever-recurring project of annexing West Florida to the state of Alabama. Economic attractions aside, the stretch of Gulf Coast east from Pensacola to the Chattahoochee-Apalachicola River line is logically and topographically one with that which opens upon Mobile Bay. So also is that to the west, at least as far as the Pearl River.

In fact, of course, the dreams of present-day expansionists have a sound historic basis. Two hundred years ago, in 1763, this whole coastal strand was united and incorporated into the new British province of West Florida. The enacting proclamation was issued October 7, and British troops commanded by Major Robert Farmar raised the Union Jack over Mobile's Fort Conde on October 20, 1763. Much attention has been given to certain events which occurred a mere one hundred years ago and to a phase of Alabama history that was completed in less than half a dozen years. Little attention has been given to the British period of our history which endured nearly twenty years and possessed great international significance, beginning and ending as it did in world-wide conflict and the creation of a new and lasting nation. But popular taste in history is not apt to change—nor Alabama to annex West Florida.

An Alabama historian might suggest, however, that the annexation of the Gulf Coast rests within his professional power, and those whose interests extend east and west from Mobile Point will find the purchase of historic rights far less costly than the sands of a score of Florida beach resorts. The rich history of British West Florida already belongs to Alabama. Un-



fortunately, like so many of our natural resources, it lies virtually unclaimed, untapped, or undeveloped, at least by Alabamians. Historiographically speaking, it is we who have been annexed by Floridians, Mississippians, Louisianans. North Carolina and even California have gotten in on the act. With the notable exception of Mobile's Peter J. Hamilton, we have been content to leave our British colonial history to other hands. Almost alone among the English colonies of 1776, we possess no records, archives, or collections worthy of the name. It is as if our legendary poverty as a state had given rise to an historical mythology concerning this phase of our development. So as in much else the crying need today is for a forward look, it is also long overdue in the realm of our historicgraphy and our recognition of the British phase of Alabama History.

The present state of knowledge, and its cause, may be demonstrated by a glance at those books from which our children and our students learn their history. At the public school level consideration may begin with two books by Marie Bankhead Owen, *History of Alabama for Junior High Schools*, written with Walter M. Jackson (Montgomery, 1938); and *Alabama: A Social and Economic History of the State* (Montgomery, 1938). The former devotes one and a half pages out of 334 to British West Florida, the latter less than one page! Rather interestingly, the Jackson-Owen volume tends to stress the continuing French domination of the region after 1763, whereas the Owen book grants to the British "their characteristic enterprise."

The same brevity and confusion may be noted in two more recent school texts. *Alabama Past and Future*, by Gladstone H. Yeuell, Charles G. Summersell, and William R. Higgs (2nd ed., Chicago, 1950), contains 124 pages of state history and devotes 124 words to the British period. Joseph Howard Parks and Robert Edgar Moore, *The Story of Alabama* (Atlanta, 1952), gives less than three out of 354 pages of text to the subject. Again it is remarkable that while, according to Parks and Moore, "Mobile barely survived" the British occupation, Yeuell, Summersell, and Higgs declare that "business in Mobile improved a great deal." Little wonder that children are confused.

The best and most recent school text, Charles Grayson Sum-

mersell's *Alabama History For Schools* (Birmingham, 1957), displays a major shift in emphasis. Summersell treats British West Florida as "The Fourteenth Colony," gives it twenty-one of his 517 pages, and grants that "the achievements of the British in West Florida were truly remarkable." Allowing every concession to the difficulty of presenting history "simply written for students in school or out of school" (Summersell) or "for boys and girls" (Parks and Moore), it must be observed that only in the last half-dozen years have Alabama school children even been exposed to this phase of their history.

It may be assumed that teachers exist to provide their students with information supplementary to text-books. If we look at the college level, where teachers are taught, Alabama historiography is dominated by Albert Burton Moore's *History of Alabama* (University, Ala., 1934), which was derived from his *History of Alabama and Her People*, Vol. I (Chicago, 1927). In both books Dean Moore gives only seven-tenths of one percent of his text to the British period. His widely used college text comes close to being anti-British in its interpretation, and his earlier presentation is in several ways superior.

In company with most writers of Alabama history, Moore looked to Albert James Pickett's classic *History of Alabama* for guidance. Originally published in 1851, Pickett's work might be likened to Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*: every subsequent writer feels obligated to cite it, quote it, paraphrase it. It has recently been reprinted—apparently for its antiquarian appeal (the 1st ed., Birmingham: Birmingham Book and Magazine Co., 1962; and the 1900 ed., with "Annals of Alabama" by Thomas McAdory Owen, Tuscaloosa: Willo Publishing Co., 1962). Pickett's book closed with the establishment of Alabama statehood; of his 653 pages, forty-five were devoted to British West Florida. His view is best characterized by that famous passage which still colors state histories: "the English population, generally, lived too fast, converting day into night, and sporting their lives away in dissipation." This is, perhaps, the only case in which an historian has credited the British with greater sociability than the French!

The sad fact is that our neighboring states' historians provide more adequate treatment of the subject than do our own. Kathryn Abbey Hanna, *Florida Land of Change* (2nd ed.,

Chapel Hill, 1948), and Charles K. Bettersworth, *Mississippi: A History* (Austin, 1959) provide very sound, up-to-date interpretations of British West Florida. J. E. Dovell's *Florida*, Vol. I (New York, 1952), which is similar in structure to A. B. Moore's earlier work, contains perhaps the best brief account of the colony to be found anywhere.

Studies of the city of Mobile form another category. The list must be headed, of course, by Peter J. Hamilton's great work, *Colonial Mobile* (2nd ed., 1910; rptd. Mobile, 1952). Hamilton filled over 100 pages with the history of Mobile under the British crown and based his account upon the best manuscript sources available to him, many of which he first uncovered. Oft-quoted fifty years after its completion, *Colonial Mobile* remains an exceptionally fine but far from infallible piece of local historiography. In 1913, Hamilton produced a simplified text "for use in the public schools," entitled *Mobile of the Five Flags*. The city's modern chronicler, Caldwell Delaney, has published a handsome volume entitled *Remember Mobile* (Mobile: Gill, 1948), and "a young people's history," *The Story of Mobile* (Mobile: Gill, 1953). In both, his treatment of the British period, following Hamilton's lead, is superior to that found in any but the latest state history, though the discrepancies between his two accounts are intriguing. Concurrent with Delaney's first book, Charles Grayson Summersell brought out a concise survey, *Mobile: History of a Seaport Town* (University, Ala., 1949), which touched briefly but factually on the British phase. Understandably, Mobile's historians have been able to do greater justice to the subject than other Alabama historians, yet even they have been slow to make use of either its materials or its possibilities.

Mention should be made at this point of Lucille Griffith's unique volume of sources which is aimed primarily at college students, *History of Alabama 1540-1900 As Recorded in Diaries, Letters, and Papers of the Times* (Northport, Ala., Colonial Press, 1962). The nature of her material poses special problems, but Miss Griffith gives relatively twice as much attention to British West Florida as does Dean Moore's college text.

The scope of Alabama history in the British period has

been fully outlined by two scholars who are no longer active in the field. The contribution of Cecil Johnson, *British West Florida 1763-1783* (Yale Historical Publ., XLII; New Haven, 1943), is deservedly well respected if not (apparently) widely read. Clinton N. Howard, *The British Development of West Florida 1763-1769* (University of California Publ. in History, XXXIV; Berkeley, 1947), and Howard's numerous articles in various historical journals, on the other hand, have not received the attention they merit. Johnson presents a nicely balanced portrait of the colony; Howard delves more deeply into several facets of the period than any other writer. Both drew heavily upon British materials which were not available to earlier students, and they set the local scene against the backdrop of imperial affairs, thereby establishing dimensional depth impossible on more restricted terms. The same characteristics are found in John Richard Alden's study of *John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier* (Ann Arbor, 1944). It is a commonplace that text-books are twenty years behind scholarship; in this case it is high time the fruits of research reached the academic table in Alabama.

Not that we alone are negligent. In many recent publications it may be observed that Alabama has suffered the results of her historiographic shortcomings. John R. Alden's third volume of "A History of the South," *The South in the Revolution 1763-1789* (Baton Rouge, 1957), allows West Florida absolutely minimal consideration. Dale Van Every's popular accounts: *Forth to the Wilderness: The First American Frontier, 1754-1774* (New York, 1961), and *A Company of Heroes: The American Frontier 1775-1783* (New York, 1962), slight both the Gulf Coast and the Indian lands to the north of 32°28'. In contrast, John Anthony Caruso's *The Southern Frontier* (Indianapolis, 1963), is markedly superior from the Alabama point of view and offers a highly readable narrative based upon modern scholarship. Lawrence Henry Gipson's monumental history of *The British Empire Before the American Revolution* is in a class by itself. Gipson's ninth volume, *The Triumphant Empire: New Responsibilities within the Enlarged Empire, 1763-1766* (New York, 1956), discusses the creation of the colony and devotes a full chapter to "West Florida as a British Province." His favorable judgment upon much-maligned Gov-



ernor George Johnstone must come as a shock to the traditionalists.

Two other new publications lie just outside the British period, but they deserve mention here for they shed light upon the circumstances of the region just prior to 1763. Daniel H. Thomas, *Fort Toulouse*, which is printed as *Alabama Historical Quarterly* XXII, No. 3 (1960), displays extensive research; unhappily but understandably it is limited to the French period. Seymour Feiler has provided a new translation of Jean Bernard Bossu's *Travels in the Interior of North America* (Norman, Okla., 1962), which is distinctly superior to any version save the original.

The University of Florida Press' Floridiana Series of Facsimile and Reprint Editions includes two items of considerable interest: Bernard Romans' 1775 *Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*, ed. Rembert W. Patrick (Gainesville, 1962); and Thomas Hutchins' *Historical Narrative and Topographical Description of Louisiana and West Florida* (1784), which has yet to be published.

On printed sources there is little to be said. Alabama can claim none. The Mississippi archivists Dunbar and Eron Rowland labored diligently fifty years ago and published some of the correspondence of Major Robert Farmar, Governor George Johnstone, and Governor Peter Chester. Several volumes of the *Illinois Historical Collections* edited by Alvord, Carter, and Pease contain valuable material relating to West Florida, as does Lawrence Kinnaird's *Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*. From Spain has come Bernardo de Galvez' *Diario de las Operaciones Contra la Plaza de Panzacola 1781* (2nd ed., Madrid, 1959), edited by Jose Porrua Turanzas. The only other archival tapping to be noted is the forthcoming publication of Montault de Monberaut's *Memoire Justificatif* which is drawn from the Gage Papers in the William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

As it is not proposed to review the periodical literature of the last few years at this time, suffice it to say that the state of Florida has duly celebrated the high points of its colonial history (though not without some sharp jabs from the historical

profession), and the *Florida Historical Quarterly* is a richer mine, for this period, than the *Alabama Historical Quarterly* or the *Alabama Review*.

As this brief survey shows, there is work to be done, and it is time that Alabamians took it upon themselves. Lack of manuscript materials within the state, or a significant body of printed sources, poses a major but not an insoluble problem. Scholarly interest and activity move hand in hand, and there are signs of both as we commemorate the bicentennial of British West Florida. Historians must first awaken and then inform the public of their heritage; then, and only then, can Alabama hope to annex West Florida—historiographically.



SOME INTERESTING ACCESSIONS OF THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY  
DURING THE FISCAL YEAR 1962-1963

*by Julia A. Perdue, Accessions Division*

Antioch Baptist Church, Chambers County, Ala., 1835-1960  
Records

Given by Rev. Basil B. McGinty

*Belle Boyd, Southern Spy of the Shenandoah*, A Booklet by  
Laura Virginia Hale

Given by Harry J. Lemley

*Belle Mina Methodist Church History*, 1880 to 1960

Given by Gilbert G. White

*Brewed in America*, The History of Beer and Ale in the United  
States, by Stanley Baron

Given by Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company

*The Story of Georgia Tech*, by M. L. Brittain

Given by Mrs. John Carter

*A History of Mooresville*, by Pat Jones

from John Brent Peebles

*Let's Keep the Record Straight*, by Rucker Agee

Gift of the author. A H A Paper.

*The Mission of the Northern and Southern Soldiery*, A memorial  
oration delivered before The Ladies Memorial Association in  
the Confederate Cemetery at Montgomery on April 27, 1874,  
by Thomas G. Jones.

Given by Hugh C. Davis

*The Natchez Trace, Indian Trail to Parkway*, by Dawson A.

Phelps. (Reprint from Tennessee Historical Quarterly, Sept. 1962)

Given by Eastern National Park and Monument Association, Herbert Olsen, Agent

*Our Women of the Sixties*

Civil War Centennial Commission Brochure

*People and Pianos*, by Theodore E. Steinway

Given by French Forbes

*Prospectus for Alabama Conference Female College, 1877-78*

Given by Mrs. Elon G. Salisbury

*Sermons, Addresses and Papers of Rev. Luther Leonidas Hill*

Given by Mrs. John Carter

Journal of Catesby Ap R Jones

Given by Catesby Ap C Jones

Muster Roll (Captain John Henry Porter, 1862-1865) 59th Alabama Infantry Regiment, Co. A

Given by Miss Annie L. Vardaman

Thirteen copies of *The Talladega Advance*, 1886.

Given by Paul C. Wilson, Jr.

Old papers and other historical materials on Troy and Pike County

Given by John R. McClure

Smith Correspondence (Otis David Smith, 1831-1905)

Given by Charles Coleman Thach, Jr.

For the Whitfield Collection (J. B.) Collections of cards to Medical Lectures, Letter dated August, 1853, Medal, Early History of Demopolis, etc.

Flag of Hilliard's Legion, made in Montgomery from Mrs. Hilliard's trousseau. Was later the flag of the 60th Alabama Infantry Regiment.

Given by Paul B. Fuller

Flag of the State of Georgia

Given by Governor's Office

Flag of the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Given by the Governor's Office

For the Josuah Martin Collection: 2 funeral announcements, 2 photographs, Alabama Female Institute Catalogue of Pupils and Anniversary Exercises, an At Home Card, 1 group photograph, 3 Daguerotypes.

Given by Mrs. Hollingsworth

Water Color Sketches for 1962 Capitol Brochure, by Richard Brough

Given by the Governor's Office

THE HISTORY OF MOUNT STERLING

*by*

*Euba Eugenia DuBose*

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master  
of Arts in the College of Arts and  
Sciences in the University of Alabama.

University, Alabama

1931

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

*The Early History of Mount Sterling*

	Page
Location of Mount Sterling .....	301
Tuscahoma Landing .....	301
Treaties with Choctaw Indians .....	301
Post Roads .....	302
Early Settlers .....	303
Post Office Established .....	305
Choctaw County Formed .....	305
Butler Selected as County Seat .....	306
Social Life .....	306
Masonic Lodge Organized .....	307
Baptist and Methodist Churches Built .....	308
Steamers on the Tombigbee River .....	310
Weddings in Mount Sterling .....	312

## CHAPTER II

*Civil War and Reconstruction*

Confederate Soldiers from Mount Sterling .....	313
The Ruffin Dragoons .....	313
Frank Young Gaines .....	314
Conditions in the Homes During the War .....	315
Delegates to Conventions .....	316
Federal Agents and Cotton .....	316
Grange Organization .....	317
Civil Rights Bill .....	320
Democratic and Conservative White Men's Club .....	321
Jack Turner and his Followers .....	322
Minutes of the Negro Meetings .....	329
Hanging of Jack Turner .....	334

## CHAPTER III

*Mount Sterling As An Educational Center*

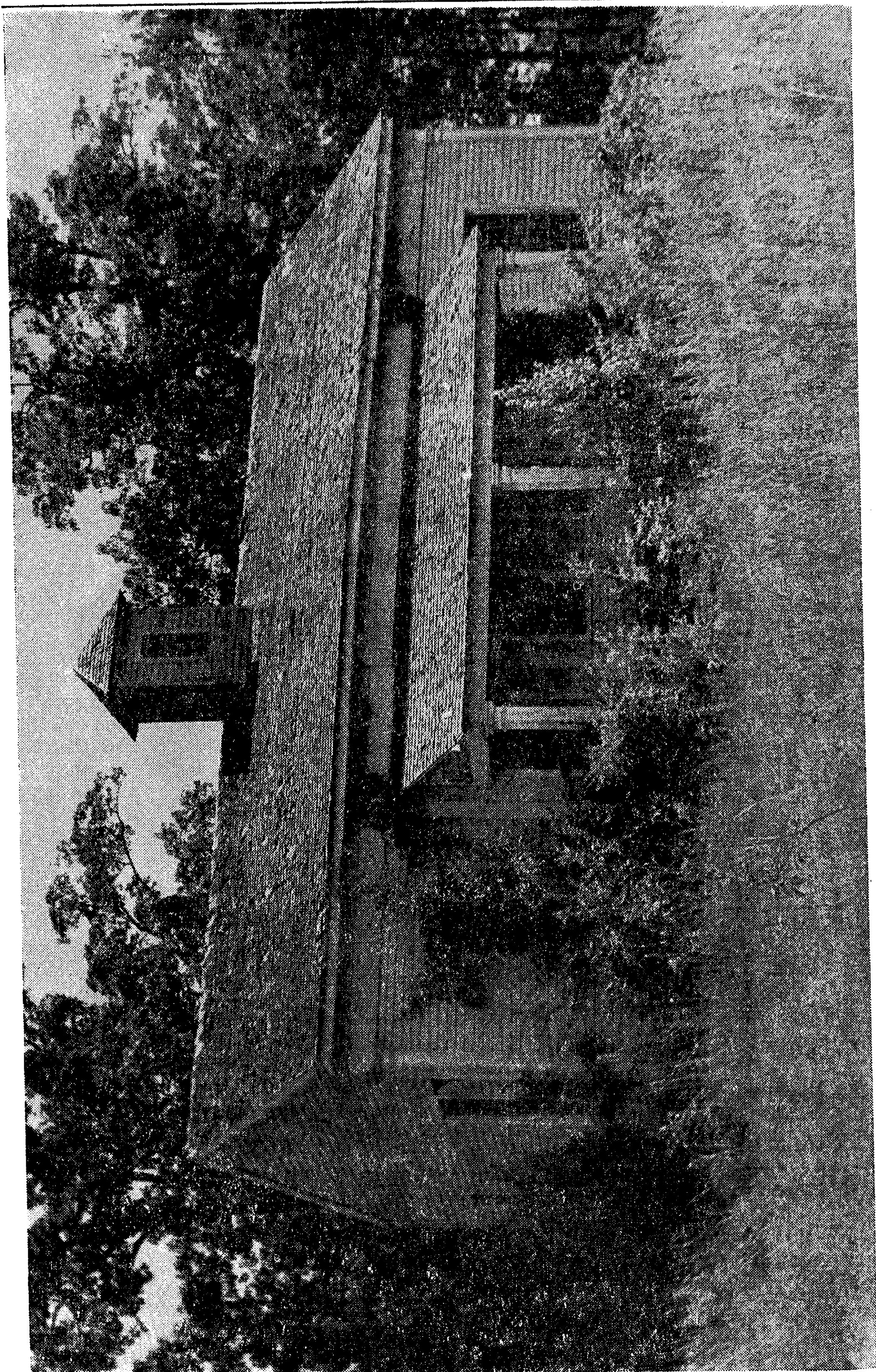
Census of 1850 .....	335
Catterlin School .....	335
Choctaw County Seminary .....	335
George Frederick Mellen .....	336
The Male Academy .....	337
John W. Massey .....	338
Tom Armstrong .....	341
Seth Smith Mellen .....	343
Modes of Punishment .....	345
Declamations and Compositions .....	345

## CHAPTER IV

*Biographical Sketches*

George Hays Carnathan .....	348
Wiley John .....	349
Marielou Armstrong Cory .....	349
Andrew Jackson Curtis .....	351
Charles Betts DuBose .....	352
Joel Campbell DuBose .....	353
Reuben Reid Gaines .....	355
Vivian Pendleton Gaines .....	355
James Edward Gray .....	357
Charles Howard Mellen .....	357
George Frederick Mellen .....	358
Charles Edward McCall .....	359
Carroll T. Prince .....	360
Sydney Trotter Prince .....	361
Thomas McCarroll Prince .....	362
Thomas McCarroll Prince, Junior .....	362
Frank Singleton Stone .....	363
George Washington Taylor .....	364
CONCLUSION .....	365
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	366





MT. STERLING ACADEMY BUILDING

## CHAPTER 1

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF MOUNT STERLING

In spite of the fact that we have several histories of the State of Alabama, there are still many places of historical interest of which nothing has been written. One of these interesting places is Mount Sterling, which is located in the Southeast fourth of section fifteen, township thirteen, range two West, St. Stephens Meridian, Choctaw County.<sup>1</sup>

This village is within the old Choctaw Indian Domain, and some claim that it was the capital city of that tribe; but others insist that the ancient capital was only a few miles from the present site of Meridian, Mississippi, about thirty miles west of Mount Sterling.

After the coming of the English, before 1782, there was a temporary Choctaw Indian camp, "Bachcha Chukka", on the Tombigbee River, at the present site of Tuscahoma Landing. This name means ridge houses.<sup>2</sup> Frequently this landing which was the established crossing or ferry of the Choctaws, was referred to as Red Bluff. It was here that an Indian Treaty for free trade was made with Pushmataha, chief of the Choctaw Indians. An Indian settlement about four miles away, at the present site of Mount Sterling, was a guard and line of defense against the Creek Indians.<sup>3</sup>

The land just South of this settlement was acquired from the Choctaw Indians by the Treaty of Mount Dexter, November 16, 1805<sup>4</sup>, and that around and North of it was acquired by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit, November 27, 1830.<sup>5</sup>

When Colonel Dinsmore, a surveyor, attempted to run the Northern boundary-line of the Mount Dexter cession, he was

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<sup>1</sup>Lindsey, W. H., Letter to author, October 22, 1930.

<sup>2</sup>Owens, T. M., *History of Alabama*, Vol. 1, pp. 85 and 253. The houses, "Chukka", were situated on a ridge, "bachcha".

<sup>3</sup>Gray, Peter, Letter to author, October 9, 1930.

<sup>4</sup>Monette, John W., *History of the Discovery and Settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi*, Vol. II, p. 365.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 443.



halted by the Captain of the Tuskahoma Indian village and not allowed to proceed further until George S. Gaines, who had charge of the United States trading house at St. Stephens, and his brother, Captain Edmund Pendleton Gaines, visited the captain and secured his consent.<sup>6</sup>

As early as 1810, the Tombigbee settlements had extended on both sides of the river as far up as Mount Sterling, more than sixty miles above Fort St. Stephens.

“Instead of the few pastoral French and Spanish of former years, an active agricultural population was springing up, impressed with the enterprise and indomitable perseverance of the Anglo-Saxon race.”<sup>7</sup>

The United States government by acts of Congress, established post roads as they were needed in the country. These post roads usually followed the Indian trails, which were broadened, so that the mail could be brought on horseback; later these broadened trails were widened enough for wagon roads. Another act of Congress, July 2, 1836, established a post road from Livingston, in Sumter County, by way of Horner's old store, Mount Sterling, McCarty and Carrollton, to Washington court house, Washington County; also one from Black's Bluff, Sumter County, to Tuscahoma, which was then in Washington County,<sup>8</sup> and the Indian trail from “Bachcha Chukka” to the Indian settlement later became the old stage coach road from East of the Tombigbee to Meridian, Mississippi.<sup>9</sup>

The cheap land, mild climate, and good timber attracted good settlers from Georgia, Virginia, Tennessee, and North and South Carolina. These settlers were energetic, self denying, and hopeful people, who began at once to cultivate the excellent sandy loam, which produced such crops as corn, oats, peas, peanuts, cotton, wheat, sweet potatoes, hay and vegetables.<sup>10</sup> The original growth on this land was long leaf yellow pine; some

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<sup>6</sup>DuBose, J. C., *Alabama History*, p. 72

<sup>7</sup>Monette, John W., *History of the Discovery and Settlement of the Valley of the Mississippi*, Vol. II, p. 385.

<sup>8</sup>Carnathan, Mrs. W. Geo. II, Letter to Author, March 19, 1931.

<sup>9</sup>Manuscript, Alabama State Dept. Archives and History.

<sup>10</sup>*Soil Survey of Choctaw County*, U. S. Dept. of Agr., p. 980.

oak, hickory, and gum on low lands; and tall switch cane along the creeks and branches.<sup>11</sup> The tall long leaf pines made excellent spire timber. These were hewn in octagonal shapes and tapered sixty feet or more in length, then hauled to the Tombigbee River where they were pinned together and floated to Mobile where they were sold to ship companies for ship spires.<sup>12</sup> Mount Sterling was noted for the tallest, straightest spires along the river, and this timber often more than remunerated the nominal price of twelve and one-half to twenty-five cents which was paid per acre for the land.

The climate was typical of the Southern Gulf region, the mean annual temperature being about 64.7°F. and the mean annual precipitation 55.91 inches.<sup>13</sup>

The first white people to enter this country moved their household goods and wares of trade in rolling hogsheads and on pack horses, and landed at Tuscahoma where they lived for a short while. This location proved to be unhealthful on account of impure water, which caused sickness, chills, and fever. Therefore, they moved to the Old Indian settlement about four miles westward, where mineral water was abundant.<sup>14</sup>

One of the first white settlers to come to this part of the country was S. E. Catterlin, who was born at Hamilton, Ohio, in 1810, and who came to Marengo County, Alabama in 1828. He had nothing so far as property was concerned, but plowed and worked for farmers in this vicinity at the rate of twelve dollars a month until he had accumulated a little money. He then came into Washington County and was married in 1831 to a daughter of James Mills.<sup>15</sup> He then built a home and established a post office, October 26, 1838. He named the post office Mount Sterling;<sup>16</sup> presumably for Mount Sterling, Kentucky, from which place he bought mules and horses to be used on the plantations. He built also a saw mill by which means

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<sup>11</sup>Harrell, A. G., Letter to author, Dec. 20, 1930.

<sup>12</sup>Note: Most of the ships carried an extra spire in case one broke while at sea.

<sup>13</sup>**Soil Survey of Choctaw Co.**, U. S. Dept. of Agr., p. 978.

<sup>14</sup>Seale, Hiram, Interview with Author, Aug. 30, 1930.

<sup>15</sup>Ball, T. H., **History of Clarke County**, pp. 686-687.

<sup>16</sup>Coleman, Arch, Letter to author, October 8, 1930.

he gained wealth in the lumber industry. In the meantime, he read and studied law, became a lawyer, and later became a strong secessionist. He was a representative in the State convention in 1861 and helped to carry the State of Alabama out of the Union. War caused him to lose \$300,000, and in 1867 he left Mount Sterling and moved to Ashley, Illinois.<sup>17</sup>

Some other early white inhabitants of this village were: Joe Levy, Abner Dill, Gray Allen, F. Vivian, Winsor Spinks, Bester Coleman, William and Greenberry Chaney, Bill Jennings, Rufus and Reuben Lassiter, Thomas McCarroll Prince, Silas Smith, Thomas Manning, Ben DuBose, Jesse Jackson, B. L. Turner, Alfred Mills, Jim Mills, Frank, George, and Will Lang, Dr. Ham, Dr. Dunlap, Mr. Borden, Mr. Maberry, Mr. Hill, and others. Most of these men came from North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, acquired large plantations along the river, and were considered wealthy as wealth was counted then.<sup>18</sup>

They built beautiful homes—colonial style, some of which were furnished with the very best furniture. One of the finest of these homes, which cost about \$5,000 at that time, was that known as the B. L. Turner home. This home was built by William Chaney and exchanged to B. L. Turner for an interest in a boat, "Alice Vivian", which was on the Tombigbee River.<sup>19</sup> This attractive stately-looking mansion still stands in Mount Sterling.<sup>20</sup>

Winsor Spinks was born in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1797, moved in barrels to West Bend, Clarke County, married and moved to Kemper County, Mississippi, then to a plantation three miles from Mount Sterling, Alabama. He raised large crops of corn, cotton and potatoes, which he shipped to Mobile. He was sheriff of Washington County when the court house was at Barrytown. He died in 1865.<sup>21</sup>

George Washington Gaines, born 1815, was a son of George

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<sup>17</sup>Ball, T. H., **History of Clarke County**, pp. 686-687.

<sup>18</sup>Mills, Neil, Letter to author, October 12, 1930.

<sup>19</sup>Carnathan, Mrs. W. G., Letter to author, March 19, 1931.

<sup>20</sup>Note: A beautiful mahogany stairway is in the central hall.

<sup>21</sup>Taylor, Mrs. Cora, Interview with author, Aug. 29, 1930.

Strother Gaines, and was a surveyor or factor, and merchant warehouseman. He had a store at Tuscahoma Landing where he traded with Indians for skins. He attended the University of Alabama in 1835, and later married Eliza V. Earle of South Carolina. He died at Tuscahoma Landing in 1853.

Will Lang came from Virginia through Georgia to West Bend, Clarke County, Alabama, and then moved to Mount Sterling.<sup>22</sup>

Mr. Hill was a native of Tennessee, and came to Alabama as a soldier in Andrew Jackson's Army. He married the widow Coleman in Greene County and moved to Mount Sterling. He is the step father of Mr. Wiley Coleman.<sup>23</sup>

The Mount Sterling post office was discontinued December 13, 1844, but was reestablished October 30, 1845, with Joseph Searcy as post master.<sup>24</sup>

On December 29, 1847, an act was approved to form a new county out of the northern part of Washington County and the southern part of Sumter County. This county embraced two tiers of townships from Sumter County and five tiers from Washington County and was named Choctaw.<sup>25</sup> In this same year the town of Mount Sterling was surveyed and laid off, and a public square was left for a court house, as it was thought that this would be selected as the county seat of the new county.<sup>26</sup> Another Act, Number 216, was passed for the appointment of two commissioners to locate the court house of Choctaw County, 1847-48:

"Reuben Reid and Henry J. Y. Moss were heretofore appointed commissioners to locate the court house of Choctaw County, but have refused to act as such, therefore:  
Sec. 1, John Price and Thos. S. Parker, be, and they are hereby appointed commissioners to locate the court house of Choctaw County."

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<sup>22</sup>Taylor, Mrs. Cora, Interview with author, Aug. 29, 1930.

<sup>23</sup>Carnathan, Mrs. W. Geo., Letter to author, Mar. 10, 1931.

<sup>24</sup>Coleman, Arch, Letter to author, Oct. 8, 1930.

<sup>25</sup>Brewer, W., *Ala., Her History and Resources*, p. 170.

<sup>26</sup>Lindsey, W. H., Interview with author, Aug. 29, 1930.



This act was approved February 4, 1848. It was decided that the seat of justice should be Butler, Alabama, a little town of two hundred inhabitants at that time, five miles west of Mount Sterling.<sup>27</sup>

On February 3, 1849, the Post Office Department at Washington, D. C., changed the Mount Sterling Post Office from Washington County into Choctaw, and Silas H. Smith, a North Carolinian, was appointed postmaster.<sup>28</sup> Silas Smith and his brother had the largest mercantile business in the county at this time and accumulated a fortune. This firm of Smith and Brother later became known as "George F. Smith and Son".<sup>29</sup>

At this time Mount Sterling had grown to be a thriving trading point with a population of about three hundred. It was a center of wealth for Choctaw County,<sup>30</sup> with inhabitants who were college trained, cultured, refined, and fashionable.<sup>31</sup> Without an exception they were church-folk, good livers, and hospitable hosts. They rode in their carriages to church; although many of them lived within easy walking distance. While they were regular in attendance on all the services of the church yet they were addicted to the usual worldly diversions of card playing, dancing and dram-drinking. A man might play poker and take his customary dram and still be most punctilious in meeting his church obligations. They dressed in the height of fashion and were a pleasure loving people. William Carnathan, an early settler, once made the statement to his daughter that he had ridden horseback forty or fifty miles to parties, which sometimes lasted several days, the gay company going from one house to another with dinners and dances at each place. Boat trips on the Tombigbee River, during which there was music and dancing, were favorite social affairs. Quite often parties

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<sup>27</sup>Brewer, W., *Ala., Her History and Resources*, p. 170.

<sup>28</sup>Coleman, Arch, Letter to author, Oct. 8, 1930.

<sup>29</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, April 13, 1867.

<sup>30</sup>Note: Three rival towns in the county were Mount Sterling, Choctaw and Tuscahoma. *The Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Oct. 12, 1866.

<sup>31</sup>Collins, Floyd, Letter to author, Sept. 8, 1930.

took "round-trips with the boat that lasted several days and nights."<sup>32</sup>

Playing the piano, singing, and horse-back riding were favorite pleasures for the girls.<sup>33</sup> Many of the girls owned beautiful saddle horses and were such skillful riders that they could go in a gallop up and down hill and over rough roads with entire safety,<sup>34</sup> even though they used side-saddles. There were block steps at homes and at churches from which the ladies might mount and dismount.

The men of early Mount Sterling were hunters of game. The boys spent much of their leisure time in hunting. Some of them used shot guns in the summer to keep squirrels out of corn fields. These animals were so numerous that they kept the first ten or fifteen rows of corn around the field destroyed. Sometime wild turkeys came into the fields to eat peas and corn, and occasionally one of these received a load of shot. Many of the boys learned to call up the turkeys by using a "yelping quill". The older boys and men enjoyed hunting opossums, coon, deer, bear, and chasing foxes. Some of the men had packs of foxhound dogs and foxes were sometime chased by men or horses and with fox dogs for a couple of days. Fishing and fish fries were quite prevalent.

During a later decade, quilting parties and log rollings were enjoyed by the people. The slaves made the quilts and rolled the logs for the wealthy planters,<sup>35</sup> but the smaller farmers looked forward to such occasions, which were usually followed by a dinner and a dance.

On April 19, 1847, the Gilead No. 81 Masonic Lodge of Mount Sterling was issued to Jacob Boyd, George Washington, Benjamin J. Brown, J. McCarty, Jr., Robinson Kidd, J. T. Foster, William Brown, David M. Dunlap, and John W. Overstreet. This lodge used the upper story of the male academy for its

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<sup>32</sup>Smith, Abbie, Letter to author, Nov. 15, 1930.

<sup>33</sup>Taylor, Mrs. Cora Sprinks, Interview, Aug. 29, 1930.

<sup>34</sup>Cory, Mrs. Chappell (Her horse's name was "Fashion".), Letter to author, Feb. 14, 1931.

<sup>35</sup>Taylor, Mrs. Cora Sprinks, Interview with author, Aug. 29, 1930.

meetings. The name of this Lodge was afterwards changed to Gilead Number 9 and the Lodge moved to Butler, Alabama, where it is now located.<sup>36</sup>

In 1854 the old male academy, or Choctaw County Seminary, was purchased and a Baptist Church was organized. This was a two story building; the lower part was used for the church and the upper story continued to be used for the Masonic Lodge, as it had been leased for this purpose for ninety-nine years.<sup>37</sup> Evidently this church was not taken into the association until several years later. The *Eutaw Whig* carried the following notice:

"The Bigby Baptist Association: This body convened with Freindship Church, Forkland, Greene County, Alabama, on Saturday, October 22, 1859. The opening sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Manly from Psalms LVII, 'God be merciful unto us, and bless us: and cause his face to shine upon us.' Rev. Wm. Howard, the moderator, discharged the business, with skill, judgment and in a businesslike manner. A new church—that of Mount Sterling, Choctaw County, was received into this association."<sup>38</sup>

The Methodist Church was established about the same time as the Baptist. Circuit Riders came to this church once a month, and Sunday School was held on other Sundays. One of the first circuit riders for this church was Reverend Wild. It is said that Mr. B. Turner and others donated one hundred silver dollars to be melted and cast into a bell to give a very sweet musical tone which could be heard for several miles. One person says that he still has most happy memories of the clear, resonant, far-sounding tones of this bell.<sup>39</sup> This bell was later cracked, but was mended and is in use at the present time.

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<sup>36</sup>Beauchamp, Geo. A., Letter to author, Oct. 24, 1930.

<sup>37</sup>Note: The George A. Beauchamp Lodge No. 657 of Mount Sterling, Ala. was organized Sept. 15, 1906, and the charter members were Thomas W. Overton, B. Love Turner, John H. Hodges, Robert W. DuBose, Charles I. McElroy, Carlton L. Williams, J. Westley Whitted, Gross A. Turner, Forest Allen, Walter V. Allen and Thomas A. Little, p. 4 (Geo. A. Beauchamp, Letter to author, Oct. 24, 1930.)

<sup>38</sup>*The Independent*, Gainsville, Ala., Sat., Nov. 5, 1859.

<sup>39</sup>Collins, J. Floyd, Letter to author, Sept. 22, 1930.

Most of the inhabitants of Mount Sterling were members of the Baptist and Methodist Churches, but there was one Catholic family, and one Presbyterian. The head of the Presbyterian family was Dr. McNealy, who was educated in Edinburgh, Scotland, and came to Mount Sterling to live. The Episcopalians used the Methodist Church for their services. Episcopalian families, living far from organized congregations, waited long years for the coming of a missionary. Under the leadership of Bishop Nicholas Hamner Cobbs, who was elected to the diocese of Alabama in 1844, began doing missionary work in what is now Choctaw County. In 1843, Rev. S. S. Lewis of Mobile, F. R. Hanson of Greene County, and J. J. Scott of Livingston; and Messrs. A. B. Winn of Demopolis and George Cleveland of Mobile, were appointed a committee "to enquire into the expediency of originating a Diocesan Missionary Society, and if deemed expedient, to report to the next convention suitable measures to carry the same into effect."<sup>40</sup> The proposed society was organized in 1844. A missionary was appointed to visit every portion of the Diocese, to encourage them to build a church, to record the names of Episcopal families, and to baptize their children. Thus new congregations were built up and seven additional missionaries were employed. . . Rev. J. F. Smith, J. S. Jarratt, R. B. Lee, Edward Denniston, W. M. Bartley, J. A. Wheelock, and J. C. Waddill. They served eighteen congregations, including Eutaw and Gainesville; Pushmataha, Butler, Mount Sterling, and Bladon Springs.<sup>41</sup>

The thirtieth Annual Convention was held in St. John's Church, Montgomery, May 2, 3, 4, and 6, 1861, and the following parochial report was given for Mount Sterling:

"Services are held at this place once a month. I baptized one adult, and solemnized one marriage. Several candidates are waiting the opportunity for confirmation. Prayer Books have been given away, and there is a goodly attendance upon my services; but the harvest is not yet ripe. Years must elapse before the husbandman's breast can be

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<sup>40</sup>Journal of the Proceedings of Convention of Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Ala. 1842-1924.

<sup>41</sup>Whitaker, Walter C., *The Church in Alabama*, pp. 48, 93, 97.

gladdened by an encouraging increase, all of which is submitted." Signed, J. Cooper Waddill.<sup>42</sup>

The Episcopal congregation did not grow as Rev. Waddill expected, and the families who belonged to this denomination attended services at Pushmataha where there was an Episcopal Church.

The statistics of Choctaw County for 1850 show there were only five Baptist Churches and seven Methodist Churches, or a total of twelve churches, in the county. Two of these were in Mount Sterling. The Baptist Churches were valued at \$2500 and could accommodate 2500 people; the Methodist Churches were valued at \$4200 and could accomodate 3500 people.<sup>43</sup>

A cemetery is located near the Baptist Church. Land was given to the community of Mount Sterling, not to the church, as a free burial ground, by Judge George F. Smith.<sup>44</sup>

During the Reconstruction period J. W. Bush was presiding elder of the Suggsville District and had two appointments west of the Tombigbee River. He used to spend the night between these two appointments at Mrs. Manning's in Mount Sterling, with whom Dr. John Massey boarded. He was a great inspiration to Dr. Massey and to other people of the community.<sup>45</sup>

By an act which was approved February, 1852, commissioners were appointed to remove obstructions in the Tombigbee River between McGan's shoals and Demopolis. Oliver H. Prince was appointed president of a commission composed of the following members: George W. Gaines, E. K. Adair, of Choctaw County; Elt S. Thornton and Alexander Carlton of Clarke County; Nathan B. Whitfield of Marengo County; John W. S. Smith of Sumter County. The work began at the lowest obstruction and proceeded higher. A board was created to advertise and let out contracts to the lowest bidders. This contract

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<sup>42</sup>Journal of the Proceedings of Convention of Prot. Epis. Church.

<sup>43</sup>Official Statistics of Choctaw Co. 1850.

<sup>44</sup>Smith, Abbie, Letter to author, Nov. 15, 1930.

<sup>45</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, p. 220.



gave bond and security of \$40,000 payable to the President of the board. The President and commissioners could, after the execution of this bond, draw one-third of the money to enable the money to enable the contract or to proceed in the work.

After the work was started another third would be drawn, and the balance upon completion.<sup>46</sup> Work like this enabled good steam boats to ply the Tombigbee River. The "James Hewitt", a freight and passenger steamer, under the command of M. Quarrier; and the steamboat "Eliza", a fast running passenger and freight steamer under the command of S. G. Stone, made regular trips in 1849, from Mobile by Tuscahoma, Gainesville, Warsaw, Vienna and to Columbus.<sup>47</sup> Slaves were used at these landings for loading and unloading freight through a shute or slide. A slave put bales of cotton into the shute at the top and another slave pushed them from the shute, at the bottom, on the steamer. S. G. Stone was master of the steamer "Admiral" in 1864. This was a splendid fast running passenger steamer which left Tuscahoma every Sunday evening at 3:00 o'clock on her upward trip and on every Tuesday evening at 3:00 on her downward trip.<sup>48</sup> Much cotton was shipped from the plantations around Mount Sterling, and supplies were brought from Mobile and landed at Gaines' Warehouse at Tuscahoma for these plantations. Ox and mule teams were then used to transport freight from Tuscahoma to Mount Sterling and to Butler.<sup>49</sup>

After the county seat was given to Butler, it became the commercial center of the county with stores, court house, and jail, but around Mount Sterling there was always a glamor—culture—because of the first settlers who attended to business in Butler, but had their homes in Mount Sterling.<sup>50</sup>

John W. Henson was appointed post master of Mount

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<sup>46</sup>Moody, *Alabama History, Acts of 1851-52*, p. 78.

<sup>47</sup>*Alabama Tribune*, Mobile, Ala., Nov. 7, 1849.

<sup>48</sup>*Choctaw News*, Butler, Ala., April 23, 1864.

<sup>49</sup>Lindsey, J. W., Interview with author, Aug. 20, 1930.

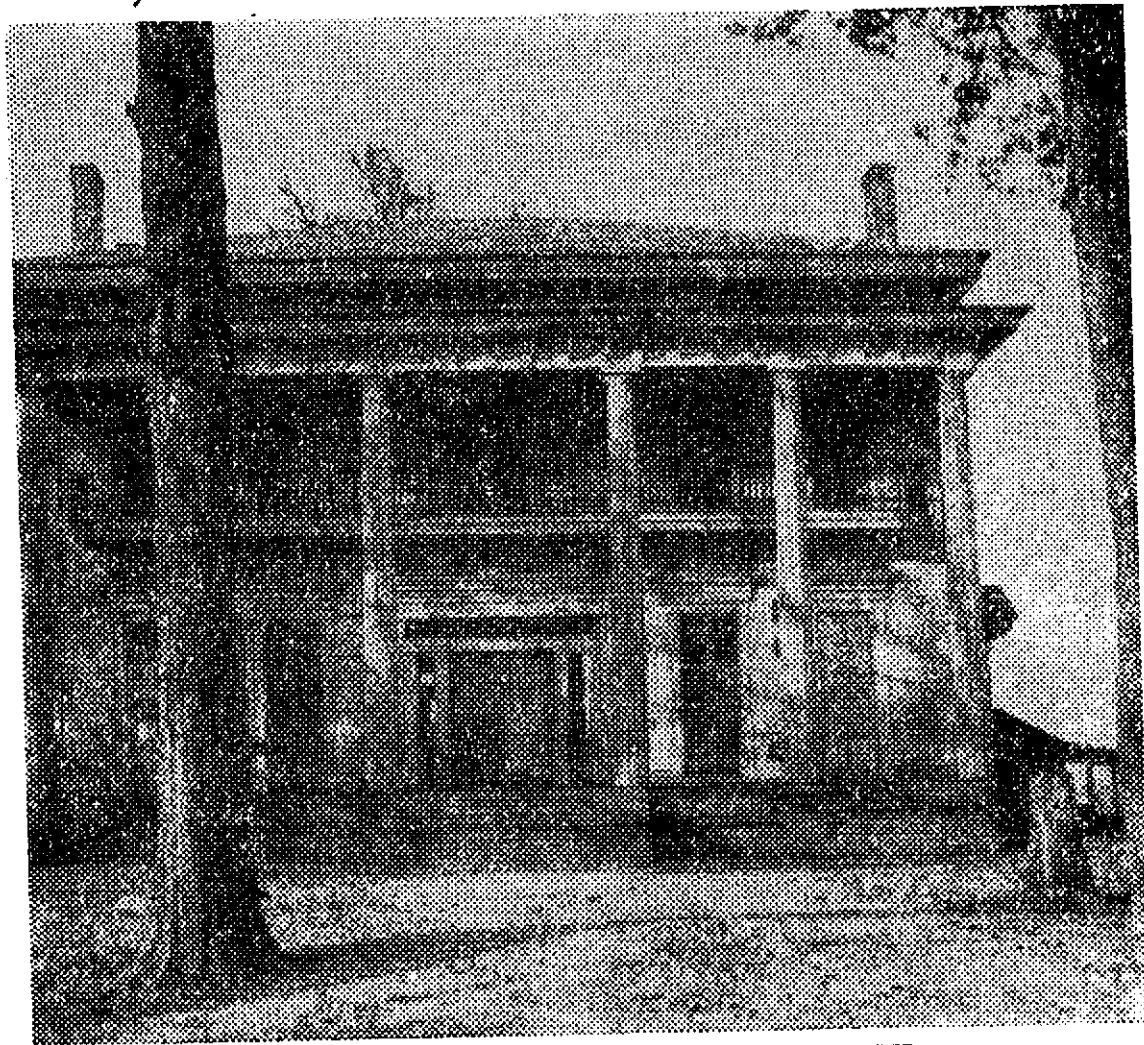
<sup>50</sup>Note: Major Sydney Trotter Prince practiced law in Butler with the "Toulmin, Taylor and Prince" firm, but lived at Mount Sterling. Toulmin was afterwards U. S. District Judge for that district and lived in Mobile; while Mr. Geo. W. Taylor moved to Demopolis, Ala., and was for about 20 years a member of Congress from the 1st Congressional District. (Prince, Carrol T.)



Sterling on August 23, 1856, to succeed Silas H. Smith. He was followed by Marion E. Tarvin, who was appointed April 9, 1860, to succeed Mr. Henson.<sup>51</sup>

Weddings were great social events in Mount Sterling. One of the most interesting weddings was that of Mr. William Gretton and Miss Rebecca DuBose. The wedding took place in the old Academy, and people came from all over the country—from Washington, Sumter, and Greene Counties. A supper was spread on long tables in the back room of the Academy, and the guests stood around the table to eat. The bride and groom went on a boat to Mobile for their bridal trip.<sup>52</sup>

Another interesting and beautiful wedding was that of Mr. Thomas Littlepage and Miss Connie Mills,<sup>53</sup> which was performed in the B. L. Turner home. It was solemnized at high noon in darkened parlors lighted by candles. The bride was dressed in a beautiful brown silk dress and carried a large bouquet of white peonies. A dinner was served soon after the wedding, and then the guests went with the bridal party to his mother's home at Pushmataha, to a reception that evening. Miss Babe Powers of Mobile, and Misses Ada, Anne and Lucille Turner of Atlanta, Georgia, attended this wedding.<sup>54</sup>



**B. L. TURNER HOME**

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<sup>51</sup>Coleman, Arch, Letter to author, Oct. 8, 1930.

<sup>52</sup>Smith, Abbie (heard her aunt, Kate Lassiter, tell this)

<sup>53</sup>Note: Mrs. Turner took Connie, her sister's child, when she was an infant and reared and educated her. She went to Salem, N. C., to school four years. She and her sweetheart were not allowed to correspond during that time. Mr. Turner would not adopt her.

<sup>54</sup>Turner, Misses Lizzie and Mary, Letter to author, Oct. 11, 1930.

## CHAPTER II

## CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

When the clarion call to arms sounded for the Confederates, Mount Sterling did not fail to contribute her share in men, money and supplies. S. E. Catterlin and Dr. Andrew Jackson Curtis were members of the Secession Convention in 1861, and pledged their support to the Confederacy.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jackson was soon appointed surgeon of a company under Captain Wilks Coleman, in the Confederate States Army. However, he was soon forced to resign this post because of ill health.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the first men from Mount Sterling to join the army were William Gretton, who took part in the siege of Vicksburg;<sup>3</sup> Andrew Olin (Toley) DuBose, who went to Virginia and fought under Stonewall Jackson;<sup>4</sup> Charles B. DuBose, who had studied medicine and was an aid to surgeons; Thomas McCarroll Prince, Jr., who was Lieutenant Colonel of the Twenty-Second Regiment, Alabama Volunteers Infantry, in the Confederate States Army; Maybanks and John Wesley DuBose; Abner Gaines; Charlie Mills; Ben Allen; and Wiley J. Carnathan.

The "Ruffin Dragoons", a part of the Third Alabama Calvary in the Confederate States Army, went from Mount Sterling in the early part of 1862.<sup>5</sup> They were given uniforms and supported by Mr. Ruffin, who lived near Pushmataha. As Mr. Will Lang and Mr. Frank Young Gaines had received military training at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, they were made officers of the company, Mr. Lang being made Lieutenant and Mr. Gaines Captain.<sup>6</sup> They had been classmates of General Grant. Mr. Gaines had served as Lieutenant under General Grant in the War with Mexico, then a colonel of the regiment. The "Ruffin Dragoons" gathered

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<sup>1</sup>Owen, T. M., *History of Alabama*, Vol. 1, p. 254.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 446.

<sup>3</sup>Turner, Miss Mary, Interview with author, Jan. 29, 1931.

<sup>4</sup>DuBose, Mrs. Emma, Interview with author, Jan. 30, 1931.

<sup>5</sup>Owen, T. M., *History of Alabama*, Vol. I, p. 253.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 628.

at the Academy in Mount Sterling where they were presented a flag by Miss Jane Burgess. Dr. George W. Smith received the flag for the Company. The muster included: George Spinks, Barton Ulmer, Brainard Turner, Ben Marshall, Jim Slater, Bill Chaney, George Gaines (corporal), Reuben Gaines, Dave Gaines, George Dill, Jim Marshall, Nat Gilmore, Bill Lassiter, Bill and John Allen, George S. Spinks, Bill and Cornelius Jackson, Bob Herrin, Heyward Taylor, Obert Turner, Wiley and Marcellus Coleman, and Arnold Seal.

The "Ruffin Dragoons" became Company A of the 3rd Alabama Cavalry, and were selected, because of their excellent training and appearance, as the escort of Albert Sydney Johnston. The "Ruffin Dragoons" were said to have, had charmed lives, for, though they served through the last two years of the war, and fought in numerous skirmishes, not a man was killed.<sup>7</sup> Some of the men from Mount Sterling who were killed during the war were Abner Gaines, Charlie Mills, Ben Allen, Moses and West Whitted.<sup>8</sup>

On July 1, 1862, Frank Young Gaines was commissioned Major, but he was forced to resign on account of ill health, his resignation being accepted March 19, 1863.<sup>9</sup> A short while before he resigned, Major Gaines was in Brigadier General Joseph Wheeler's Brigade in the Stone River Campaign. On January 26, 1863, Brigadier General Wheeler reported that on the twenty-sixth day of December his command, including the Third Alabama Cavalry under F. Y. Gaines, was stationed at Stewart's Creek on the Murphreesborough and Nashville Pike and formed a continuous line. He said that a large force of the enemy advanced about seven o'clock on the morning of December 26, 1862, and drove in the Confederate Vedettes. Then the Southerners engaged the enemy in a skirmish which resulted in their being driven back three miles. They engaged the enemy again on the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth, at which time a large number of the Northerners were killed while there was only a slight loss for the Confederates. After several engagements Gen-

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<sup>7</sup>Ulmer, Lucy, Letter, Nov. 15, 1930.

<sup>8</sup>Misses Neil Mills, Lizzie and Mary Turner, Letters, Oct. 12.

<sup>9</sup>Owen, T. M., *History of Alabama*, Vol. III, p. 628.

eral Wheeler's command finally reached Murfreesborough, where the enemy was driven back.<sup>10</sup> At the close of the war, Mr. Gaines was offered a cabinet position by President Grant, but he declined as he was a Democrat. He declined also the appointment of the governorship of the State of Alabama for the same reason. He returned to Tuscahoma and took charge of the warehouse and farm which had been left by the death of his brother, George W. Gaines, in 1853.<sup>11</sup>

The people in Mount Sterling fared very well during the war. After the Confederate States were blockaded they were handicapped because they could not get some things which they were accustomed to having. One of the commodities which was scarce, and which was badly needed, was salt. It became necessary for people to scrape up the dirt from the floor of the smoke houses, boil it, and then strain it, in order to secure salt. On March 30, 1863, John W. Henson, of Tuscahoma, printed the following advertisement:

"Salt! Salt! Salt! I have on consignment, a lot of fine Bon Secure salt to be exchanged for any kind of country produce, bacon, lard, corn, fodder, in bales, peas, sweet potatoes, butter, leather, shoes, cloth, or almost anything that persons may desire to barter."<sup>12</sup>

Another commodity which became very scarce was coffee. Roots and berries were sometimes parched and used as a substitute for this beverage.

One terrible malady which affected the country was hog cholera. This disease became very prevalent in 1864 and killed hundreds of hogs which were to have been the main source of meat for the people.<sup>13</sup> Various remedies were used to prevent and to cure this disease. Red pepper was cut or beaten up and mixed with the food for the hogs; gunpowder was mixed with

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<sup>10</sup>**Reports and Official Records of War of Rebellion**, Series 1, Vol. XX, p. 958, 910.

<sup>11</sup>Palmer, T. W., **Register of Univ. of Ala.**, p. 44. (Mr. F. Y. Gaines was a Mason, an Episcopalian. He died at Tuscahoma January 26, 1873. Owen, T. M., **Hist. of Alabama**, Vol. III, p. 628.)

<sup>12</sup>**The Choctaw News**, Butler, Alabama, April 23, 1864.

<sup>13</sup>**The Choctaw Herald**, Butler, Alabama, June 15, 1876.



milk and given to them; and they were bled in the roof of the mouth.

The women of Mount Sterling had an active part in the war. Some of them worked in the field, in the stores, and attended the stock; while others spent a great part of their time spinning and weaving cloth and blankets, and knitting socks to send to the soldiers.

Mount Sterling sent the following delegates to the State Convention: Thomas Wilkes Coleman and Joshua Morse in 1865, Luther R. Smith in 1867, and Sidney T. Prince and William Greene in 1875. Choctaw County was represented in the Senate in 1855-56 by Thomas McCarroll Prince. Representatives from the County were James G. Slater in 1859-60, J. T. Foster in 1861-65, and G. Frank Smith in 1866-67 and 1870-72.<sup>14</sup>

Luther R. Smith was appointed postmaster of Mount Sterling August 20, 1866. At this time there was a semi-weekly mail from Livingston to Butler and to Mount Sterling; Also a weekly mail to Quitman, Mississippi.<sup>15</sup> The July 6, 1867, issue of the *Herald* gave a notice of a change in the mail schedule from Tuesday and Friday of each week to Monday and Thursday. Sebastian Young was appointed postmaster March 3, 1868; but the office was discontinued August 31, 1868. However, it was reestablished June 10, 1869, with Harry L. Glover as postmaster. He was succeeded by Percy G. Smith January 14, 1878, who served until July 10, 1890, when E. J. Brewster was appointed to this place. Mr. Brewster served only a short while and was succeeded by Alice Ezell July 30, 1890, who in turn was succeeded by Preston M. Smith August 8, 1890. Mr. Smith was succeeded by Robert W. DuBose May 23, 1899, who is the postmaster at the present time.<sup>16</sup>

During 1865 there was a great deal of confusion about the movement of the cotton which had been stored away. Some of this cotton had been sold to the Confederate Government and paid for in Confederate bonds; some had been sold to Commis-

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<sup>14</sup>Owen, T. M. *History of Alabama*, Vol. 1, p. 254.

<sup>15</sup>*The Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, January 12, 1867.

<sup>16</sup>Coleman, Arch, Letter to author, Oct. 8, 1930.

sion merchants in Mobile, and some of it was being held by the farmers who produced it. Some cotton had been shipped to Europe during the first years of the war, but the greater part of it had been stored in sheds and in gin houses on the plantations.<sup>17</sup> After the war was over, agents of the Federal government scoured the country in search for Confederate cotton which they claimed was the property of the United States by right of conquest. Cotton was selling for five hundred dollars a bale and was the only produce which would bring cash money; so the merchants were eager to get possession of what they had bought, and the farmers were anxious to prevent their stored cotton from being carried away by the agents. The Confederate government had never made some of its bonds good. The farmers believed the cotton was their own until they had received money for it. They used private guards, at the rate of five dollars a night, to protect the cotton, while the agents used soldiers to protect their claims. The merchants and farmers often worked at night and sent wagons carrying cotton over the roads and through the woods to the river where it was shipped away. Often these were caught and a fight would take place; occasionally, a man was killed.<sup>18</sup>

When the war was over, farming supplies, such as land, teams, corn and fodder, which were no longer needed by planters who had lost their slaves, were given to the Confederate soldiers.<sup>19</sup>

A large meeting of the farmers of Choctaw County assembled in Butler September 2, 1874, for the purpose of organizing a "Grange" to stimulate all legitimate business and to encourage home manufactureres by patronizing them rather than sending products away. At this meeting S. S. Mellen presided and Israel Pickens acted as secretary. Committees appointed to represent Butler, Pushmataha, Mount Sterling, DeSotoville, Tompkinsville, and Walnut Grove were to confer with all parties who were engaged in business and to request them to cooperate with the farmers. The committee for Mount Ster-

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<sup>17</sup>(Most of the plantations had their own gins which were run by horse power.)

<sup>18</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, pp. 219-20.

<sup>19</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, February 2, 1867.



ling was composed of William Woodward, H. Vaughan, and W. I. Turnbow. The Mount Sterling district included Tuscahoma vicinity.<sup>20</sup>

One of the first problems of the Grange was to correct the great evil practiced by tenants and others in trafficking and in disposing of portions of crops which in most cases did not belong to them. Business men were requested to desist from trading for corn, cotton, potatoes, peas, or any other product of the community without authority from those with whom parties proposing to sell were known to be employed. *The Choctaw Herald*, September 9, 1874, stated:

“The farmers in this community are making a laudable effort to stop the evil practice of purchasing corn, cotton and other produce from negroes who own nothing in the world . . . This practice has been indulged in at the expense of our farming friends long enough, and self-protection demands that some means be adopted that will put an end to it. Nine out of every ten negroes in the county will come out in debt to their employers at the end of the year, having nothing of their own—not even bread to eat; yet, if allowed to do so each one of these negroes will, this fall, sell corn enough to support him and his family through the winter. This will be an unusually tight winter on the darkies, and if they can make a support by stealing corn from their employers and selling it again, or trafficking it at some store or grocery, they will not hesitate to do so.”<sup>21</sup>

Resolutions were passed September 7, 1874, by the Mount Sterling Grange Number 214 as follows:

“Whereas the traffic in farm products by irresponsible parties has been carried on in this county to an alarming and ruinous extent to the farmers; and whereas we believe that every good and honest man in this county, of all classes, is desirous of having a stop put to this illicit traffick; and whereas it is the duty of every man to use his

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<sup>20</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, September 2, 1874.

<sup>21</sup>*The Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 9, 1874.

honest endeavors to protect every interest that pertains to the prosperity of our people. Be it resolved: That we the members of the Mount Sterling Grange do pledge ourselves not to buy, barter, or receive any farm products from any person, or to trade with, give our countenances or support to any persons whether in the Grange or not, who does buy, barter, or trade for such products unless such party has pointed evidence that the same is unincumbered and the party selling the same is the rightful owner."

These resolutions were indorsed by H. L. Gaines, S. T. Prince, S. H. Smith, H. L. Glover, A. Abney, and A. H. Smith. A committee of four was appointed to ask the merchants, grocery keepers of Mount Sterling, Tuscahoma, and Butler to indorse these resolutions in a written form. Some of these merchants did not indorse the measures, but formed the following resolutions:

"Resolved 1: That the farmers of this section, be they Grangers or not, are requested to furnish us with a written list of the hands on their plantations who cannot exercise their rights by disposing of any produce they may bring us for sale.

Resolved 2: That we, the merchants of Butler, who have refused to cooperate with Mount Sterling Grange in not countenancing those of our friends who do buy this produce are willing and do solemnly agree, that we will not countenance those persons who are named on these lists above registered and that we further agree that we will keep a separate entry book where we will record all persons names who do sell us produce, with the date and amount of such produce, thereby enabling the farmer to detect any persons who are unlawfully disposing of their effects, and by this means have their illicit traffick put an end to, agreeably to all parties and at the same time allowing every man his rights without questions.

Signed,

F. S. Ulmer

J. W. Hurst & Company

C. A. Spagenburg

C. P. Mills & Co."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Choctaw Herald, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 2, 1874.

The Mount Sterling Grange Number 214 met on the first Saturday of each month, and women as well as men were members of it. In 1874 V. P. Gaines was secretary of this organization and B. F. Marshall was Worthy Master.<sup>23</sup> This grange was fortunate in securing special freight rates on the steamers of the Tombigbee. Captain Frank Stone had three splendid steamers on the river which enabled him to do the transportation for all the planters adjacent to the river. The freight rates were fixed by the Grange and were as reasonable as any fair-minded man could ask.<sup>24</sup> This action became almost necessary after steam boat companies attempted to form a monopoly in order to charge from two to three prices for freight, and to force the shippers to pay this freight charge before the boats left the wharves.<sup>25</sup> After the Grange fixed the rates for freight, bales of cotton could be shipped from Tuscahoma to Mobile for twenty-five cents per bale.<sup>26</sup> J. G. Walker, who leased Tuscahoma landing in 1875, made a great reduction in the price of storage, which was a great assistance and accommodation to the farmers.<sup>27</sup>

The people of Choctaw County were very bitterly opposed to the Civil Rights Bill, which they called a "Social Rights Bill rather than a Civil Rights Bill",<sup>28</sup> because they believed it would give the negroes the same rights as the white people to the theaters, public schools, hotels, and churches. They objected especially to mixed schools for the white and colored children. The *Herald* of June 4, 1874, carried the following article:

"We can't afford to pay six or seven hundred thousand dollars per annum to support a school system from which Congress proposes to banish our own flesh and blood. We have no objections to urge against education of the blacks provided the schools for the two races are kept separate and distinct each from the other. Steps should be taken to abolish this bill without an hour's delay."

The second Civil Rights Bill passed on March 11, 1875, and was a law. Some believed that it was passed solely for the pur-

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<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 16, 1874.

<sup>24</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Nov. 18, 1874.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, Butler, Alabama, June 17, 1874.

<sup>26</sup>*Butler News*, Sept. 14, 1876.

pose of preserving unity in the Republican ranks and that the promoters of the bill hoped to attain this end by sowing the seeds of dissension, dislike, and enmity in the breast of the colored people toward the whites.<sup>29</sup> They believed that such legislation would bring disaster to the political party that should attempt to follow it in its numberless and mysterious ramifications.

A Democratic and Conservative White Man's Club was organized at Mount Sterling. Such men as Messrs. Altman and Prince were orators who acquitted themselves in such a highly creditable manner with their discussions of the political issues of the day that they stimulated the club to renewed exertions in behalf of Caucasian supremacy.<sup>30</sup> S. T. Prince was elected chairman of the Executive Committee of the Democratic and Conservative Party of Choctaw county to fill the place left vacant by the removal of Thomas Armstrong.<sup>31</sup> However, in spite of the enthusiastic club meetings, Mount Sterling lost its prestige as a Democratic precinct in 1876.<sup>32</sup> Two hundred and three votes were cast, sixty-seven of which were white and the remainder, one hundred and thirty-six, colored. The total Republican vote was one hundred and twenty-six. The total Democrat vote was seventy-seven. There was one ticket with the name of the congressional candidate torn off. One white man voted the Radical ticket and eleven negroes voted the straightout Democratic ticket. Four negroes offered to vote but decided not to do so when challenged. Three of them had been convicted of a penitentiary offense and one was a non-resident.

Radicals, Carpet-Baggers and Scalawags were eager to stir up trouble between the Democrats and Republicans, and for this reason used their influence to cause the freedmen to rebel against their old masters and friends. It was said that radical newspapers

“Seized upon every murder or assassination, in which the

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<sup>27</sup>**Choctaw Herald**, Butler, Alabama, 1875.

<sup>28</sup>**Ibid.**, Jan. 22, 1874.

<sup>29</sup>**The Choctaw Herald**, Butler, Alabama, March 17, 1875.

<sup>30</sup>**Ibid.**, Butler, Ala., Sept. 16, 1874.

<sup>31</sup>**Ibid.**

<sup>32</sup>**Butler News**, Butler, Alabama, Nov. 2, 1876.

victim chanced to be a Republican, for the purpose of saddling the accountability in such cases upon the Democratic and Conservative Party, and . . . they habitually resort to all manner of misrepresentation in order to accomplish their nefarious designs.”<sup>33</sup>

The peace and safety of the white people in Choctaw County was seriously and dangerously threatened by war-like demonstrations on the part of the negroes. One negro in the community of Mount Sterling who caused violent clashes between the whites and blacks was a slave of B. L. Turner, called Jack. He seemed to have an intelligent yet insolent manner, and was a very popular leader of the negroes. He said the white people had been governing the South long enough, and that it was time for the negroes to rule.

“Politicians told him that he could be a great help to their plans and that he could make money by serving them. Thus flattered and encouraged, he got into quarrels with the white people and often defied the laws.”<sup>34</sup>

He was arrested and jailed for minor offenses on several occasions after he was freed, but his former master befriended him and bailed him out.

Mr. Willis, one of the Mount Sterling inhabitants, owned and operated a mill and often repaired farming implements for his patrons. One day Jack Turner rode up to his mill, slung down a plow, and said, “I am going to Butler and will be back here tomorrow morning. I want this plow fixed and you be sure to do it.” His manner was far from polite, but Mr. Willis did not make a reply. The next morning Mr. Willis got up unusually early, took his gun and went to the mill where he sat down and waited for Jack’s return. None of the workmen had arrived; so Mr. Willis was alone. Soon Jack was seen approaching. He rode up and said, “Is my plow ready?” Mr. Willis looked steadily at him for a second and replied, “No”.

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<sup>33</sup>Choctaw Herald, Aug. 19, 1874, Butler, Ala.

<sup>34</sup>Choctaw Herald, Butler, Alabama, August 19, 1874.



They glared at each other and then Jack said, "Mr. Willis, you got mad. I thought you wuz a Christian."<sup>35</sup>

In the campaign of 1874 Jack Turner organized the negroes into secret societies, made a statement that he had forty men at his commanded, that he intended to whip several negroes in Choctaw County, and that as soon as he got fifteen or twenty more men he would "do the job" for B. L. Turner, his old master.<sup>36</sup>

The negroes held a meeting at Tuscahoma and selected delegates to go to the Convention at Montgomery. Huff Chaney, a negro man, was accused of publishing throughout the county the proceedings of this meeting. Soon after this accusation was made Huff Chaney was taken into the river swamp near Tuscahoma . . . "by a party of black fiends in human shape" and severely whipped and lacerated. About the same time, the following letter was written:

"Mt. Sterling, Alabama  
August, 13, 1874.

Mr. W. B. Jones  
U. S. Commissioner  
Demopolis, Alabama.

Shall we colored Republicans be killed out again by the Ku Klux? The white gentlemen have killed some ten of our men this day, August 13. We had to defend ourselves. The Democrats say that not a radical shall vote in Choctaw in November. What shall we do? Please do come down and investigate the matter as a U. S. officer. We colored people are not afraid of searching for the truth. We assembled at Jack Turner's to have a peaceful political meeting—had no idea of any disturbance until pistols were fired at us by the white people.

Your friends,

Bengay Wood  
Joe Turner  
Ben Sikes

Jack Turner  
William Sikes  
Ned Bush"<sup>38</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Willis, Pearl, Daughter of Mr. Willis, Letter to author, Oct. 22, 1930.

<sup>36</sup>Choctaw Herald, Butler, Ala., Aug. 19, 1874.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Choctaw Herald, Butler, Alabama, August 19, 1874.



The people believe that this letter was manufactured by "some white scoundrel with a black heart,"<sup>39</sup> for party purposes, and that the negroes whose names were appended to it had no knowledge of it. It was certainly a malicious falsehood, as no one had been killed. But Federal soldiers, stationed in Demopolis under the command of Egbert and Wolf, came in wagons and camped at the Ulmer place. As people in Butler were unwilling to give these soldiers anything to eat, they had to live awhile on sardines and crackers. A warrant for the arrest of twelve men was in their possession, but Captain Stimson, one of their leaders discovered his own name on this list. He went back to their colonel, who was stationed in Demopolis and was told it was all a mistake.<sup>40</sup>

The solicitor of the county sent for Huff Chaney and a witness of the whipping. On August 12, 1874, E. H. Glover, the Deputy sheriff at that time, went with a warrant for the arrest of the participants in the whipping. This warrant was to be returned to the Choctaw County court which was to be held August 13, 1874, Hon. J. S. Evans, Judge, presiding.

Mr. Glover started with a posse of five to execute the warrant. They met Jack Turner on the public road, armed with a gun and pistol. He was told that they had a warrant for him and that he must appear at court in Butler that day. He replied, "I don't know about it."<sup>41</sup>

Mr. Glover filled out a bond for him and asked him to sign it, which he refused to do; but, upon being told that his failure to sign it would mean imprisonment, he signed it. It was conditioned for his appearance at court. He was disarmed and Mr. Glover and the posse went on to arrest the others. Later, while a bond was being filled out at the school house for another of the party, it was said that Jack seemed to be in a rage and told a boy to go to the Catlin and Ridgeway places and tell the men there to get their arms and meet him at once at Tom King's and to bring him the names of all that refused to come.<sup>42</sup> He

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<sup>39</sup>**Ibid.**

<sup>40</sup>Ulmer, Oliver Cromwell, Interview with author, Aug. 29, 1930.

<sup>41</sup>**Choctaw Herald**, Butler, Alabama, August 19, 1874.

<sup>42</sup>Note: He then added, "By G..d, this is as good time to die and go to h..l as any other."

was later seen at Tom King's with eight or ten armed men, and about an hour later he was seen on the Mount Sterling road with twenty-five other negro men, all armed except three. Huff Chaney was on the same road, a short way ahead, so Mr. Glover and his posse, fearing that the negroes would injure Huff, rode on ahead of them. Four of the posse were left at Mount Sterling and the fifth one rode on to Butler with Mr. Glover.

About fifty men happened to be in Butler that day for a Grange meeting and for County court. Sheriff Glover told them about 11:00 o'clock that he anticipated trouble with Jack. It was agreed that it was advisable for some old men to go out to meet the negroes, ascertain their intentions and endeavor to pacify them. These men began to prepare themselves and several fired off their guns to reload them. Jack soon appeared near town, with his force increased to about thirty men, all armed but three. Mr. J. W. Bruister, A. J. Gray, E. McCall and J. E. Scott, all unarmed, went out about one-half mile from town to the place where the negroes had halted. Sheriff Glover went out alone and told them that those whom he had arrested must attend court, and then left them. Mr. Bruister asked their leader, Jack Turner, what that meant; and he replied that he had been summoned to court and was going in. Mr. Bruister urged him not to go in that way, as there would be trouble, and that those who were not required to attend court should return home without going to Butler. Jack said they were going in just that way, that the white people had had the law and courts all their own way, and the colored men now intended to have their rights; that a law had been passed guaranteeing them their rights; that if all should be arrested who had been concerned in whipping Huff Chaney, he was willing to be tried; but that those of them who had been arrested should not be tried without the others.<sup>43</sup> He showed a great deal of temper, swore frequently and impressed Mr. Bruister with the belief that he intended to use force in maintaining his views. However, he later stated that they meant to deposit all the arms in John Eddy's shop and that he had no thought of resisting the laws.

The negroes could see that there were a good many men in town. About that time the posse of four, which had been left

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<sup>43</sup>Choctaw Herald, Butler, Alabama, August 19, 1874.

at Mount Sterling, joined by about five others, came up right behind the negroes. Jack's men became frightened and began to leave him and to go off through the woods,<sup>44</sup> and presently Jack, himself, followed them. As they fled two shots were fired into the air, probably one of them from one of the negroes in the woods. Not a single shot was fired at the negroes, and not one was injured. It was reported in a few days that the negroes had crossed in to Marengo County and had collected a force of two hundred negroes to resist re-arrest.

Mr. Glover then received a warrant for their re-arrest and with a posse of about one hundred and fifty men went to the river and informed the sheriff of Marengo County of the situation and asked his assistance. He came on the 19th of August, but the negroes had disbanded and scattered and none of them were found. Jack went to Montgomery to attend the Republican State Convention. Sometime later eleven of the negroes were quietly arrested and five who were implicated in the whipping of Huff Chaney were tried and convicted.<sup>45</sup>

The Choctaw *Herald* of September 23, 1874, carried the following article.

"A fine of \$500—the lowest amount allowed by law—was imposed upon them. Jack Turner and a few others included in the same indictment demanded a trial by jury. They were required to furnish bail in the sum of one thousand dollars, in default of which they were committed to jail to await the action of the grand jury. We hope the fate of these negroes will prove a wholesome lesson to the colored people. In view of the fact that the victim in this lynching affair was beaten in a most brutal and inhumane manner, and the offence was of a most aggravated character, the parties who have been tried have cause to congratulation in that they received the lowest penalty provided by law. If this lynching had been done by white men, the radicals, both white and black, would have been eager

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<sup>44</sup>Note: Jack called to his men and asked them not to desert him but to follow him and he would lead them into Butler, but they continued to run.

<sup>45</sup>Choctaw *Herald*, Butler, Alabama, October 14, 1874.

for the enforcement of the extreme penalty of the law; and no doubt, would have managed to secure the intervention of the United States authorities, notwithstanding our state courts have exclusive jurisdiction in such cases.

We have no idea that Capt. Jack Turner would have surrendered himself to the custody of the sheriff, but for the fact that Federal troops have been stationed at this place. Jack no doubt believed that these soldiers were sent here for his special protection, in response to his lying letter to Bill Jones not long ago, and that they would not suffer him to be sent to prison."

During this trouble with the negroes the women and children were left at home and were very much in fear that the negroes would come and kill them.<sup>46</sup> On the day after the riot a negro was seen to enter the premises of a farmer and then to leave in a few minutes. A young lady on the place, seeing the strange negro leave, asked one of the little negroes who happened to hear the negro tell his business what that strange negro man wanted. At first the little negro refused to tell, but fearing it might be best, he said, "He come after help to fight the white folks."<sup>47</sup>

The September 9, 1874, issue of the *Choctaw Herald* carried the following news:

"We understand that Capt. Jack Turner, one of the principal actors in the recent disturbances in this county is very anxious to place himself in the custody of the sheriff, but pretends that he is afraid to do so, lest he might suffer violence at the hands of the whites. This is about the first time we ever heard of Jack Turner being afraid of anything; he had generally been regarded as a stranger to fear. But if he is really afraid to return and is staying away on that account, we will relieve his apprehension by saying that the whites have no desire nor intention of harming him, and that he can come up at any time without danger of being molested. And when he does come, we

<sup>46</sup>Cory, Mrs. Campbell, Letter to author, Feb. 14, 1931.

<sup>47</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Aug. 26, 1874.

hope Jack will be kind enough to show us the graves of those nine colored men who were recently killed in our county. Most people about here are slow to believe that anybody was even wounded, and as Jack made the statement in a published letter he ought to feel sufficiently interested in the vindication of his veracity to show us the place where these men were buried.”<sup>48</sup>

Jack Turner made a statement to Mr. Charles Hayes that on his way to Montgomery he met Dr. W. B. Jones of Demopolis, Alabama, who exhibited and read to him a letter, purporting to have been written from Mount Sterling on the 13th day of August, and to have been signed by himself and several others. He said these names were forged and that, to the best of his knowledge and beliefs, the statements of the letter were false.<sup>49</sup> He admitted that he had agreed to it at the time in order to have men sent down to protect him against the harm he feared in consequence of the part he had taken against Huff.<sup>50</sup>

The news column of the *Choctaw Herald*, November 25, 1874, stated there was a strong probability that Capt. Jack Turner would soon get out of “limbo”. It was hoped, however, that Jack had learned a lesson which would operate as an effectual reminder in case he should again become possessed with radical devils.

The February 3, 1875, issue of the *Herald* stated that Jack was one of the inmates in jail, but that steps were being taken to liberate him. It also stated:

“It will be remembered that this Jack made his threats against every white man, woman and child between this place and Tuscahoma and gave his old master five hundred lashes. Now after a lapse of a few months, his old master has loosened his purse strings and is ready to liberate him.”

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<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, Sept. 9, 1874.

<sup>49</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 26, 1874.

<sup>50</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 2, 1874. (Quoted from *Montgomery Advertiser*.)



He was bonded out of jail and began to carry out his deep laid plots of vengeance which he had planned against the unsuspecting white of the neighborhood.<sup>51</sup> As early as 1878 he was holding secret political meetings and planning to destroy the white people of Mount Sterling, Butler, and other communities. The minutes of some of these meetings were lost and found on Tuesday morning, August 23, 1882, by three white men, who delivered them to the solicitor for action. The exact copies (except for the omission of names) of these minutes are given below:

"Aug. the 5, 1882. Mt. Olive, Capt. Jack Turner meet at night on the 5 of Aug. with his club and Capt. Turner made a noble Peach and said he want all to join in a way and said that he had made up a club of 285 he want more to join him and good many raly to him (here follows a list of names omitted as no proceedings against them have been taken) and the list was to go over to DESotoville Precinct for Capt. Peter Hill as it is our last Round Don by oder of the meeting."

Capt. Turner, Ch.  
Jesse Wilson, Clerk

"the officers meeting aug. the 6, 1882 at Peter Hill and Gen. Turner Jack in the chair and the Gen. and Capt. Turner Moses said that he wanted all the Democratic negroes kill and it was agree to and Capt. Peter Hill said he want all the Cu Kluck negroes it was agree to and Gen. Jack Turner made a Peach on his war say Dear Friends in the year 1878 we made up this Club and now we have got strong in to it and let us be mens I have run with the white mens until I got all Their art. last fall you all send me to Mobile Powder and shots and we have 800 gun and now on the 17 night of Sept. let us rally to our Place and be mens indeed. Gen. in Chaif

F. D. BARNEY, CLERY

"and by the 9 of aug. all Desotoville Paper must Com to the Gen-Clerk at Tuscahoma ala so the Book may be ready

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<sup>51</sup>Choctaw Herald, Butler, Alabama, Feb. 24, 1875.

to meet all of our officer to be corrected if any to be Good by”

MR. JACK TURNER, CAPT.  
Tuscahoma, Ala.

“Club meeting Held on the Camp Grounds C. C.: Aug. the 8 night in going the last round we got more to join us (names omitted) and this is all that we can get and this makes No. 31 in Desotoville Pre- Dear Sir it is hard to write on our work For have to write almost in the Dark and when this get to our Des. Clerk hand he will put in on the book right for he is a better writer.

and also say to Gen. J. Turner that he must excuse my hand write Fed Barney to correct it on his Book when he get his list and I have Ben on the Capt. Grown's to-night as you told me and everything is all right.”

“Aug. the 10, 1882. We met in the meeting our last time and number up our mens and we are by this time 400 in number and we want to know how many you all have in Desotoville B. t. Gen. Jack turner, Capt. Moses turner, Lu. Rands West, Zenson Coleman, Capt. S. Scott Aaron.”

FED BARNEY

“We met in the Club with Capt. Peter Hill in the chair to Deside on killing and we agre to kill one on E. McCall Place 2 on Ed Watkins place one on Capt. McCall Place only 5 in this B. t. and also we will be all right on the 17 Sept. at night the meeting Demand M. (name omitted) to take this our Papers to Capt. J. Turner at Tuscahoma by Wenday night and tell him that we have Don we can do.”

CAPT. PETER HILL, CHAIR

“Dear Gen. J. turner we are not forgot what you said to us in 1878 when we first meet we keep it in remember.”

Captain Peter Hill

(Here follows a list of names omitted) "We have got more mens (another list of names) this is all we can get in this B.t.

this is to certify that we in Club have promes to Give Mr. Willis Lymon 50 cts per day to Cary our paper and Collect members for Club As he is working by the Day. This is the only way we can up our Club. Done by order of the Club July 1882. Gen. Jack Turner, Chair, Capt. Moses Turner, Vice Capt. Peter Hill Gard. F. D. Barney Clerk. In Desotoville Prec."

CAPT. JACK TURNER, Seal.

"Mr. Capt. Peter Hill Dear Sir Please send me those Paper in. We want to get all the member name on one Book and Dear Sir you must see Willis Lymon and get his paper and M (name omitted) and get his we want them in before we Be betray. Please com down Sunday and let us know how many you got."

GEN. JACK TURNER

## DESOTOVILLE LEST NO. 2

"Cared to (name omitted) by Aaron Scot and Rands Wes. Plese Don loose it Don by order of the Club meeting in June 1882 Tuscahoma, ala. the if this war are Messrs. Gen. Jack turner, Capt. Moses turner L. (name omitted) S. (name omitted) Sec. Capt. Peter Hill D. B. t. Sec. Gen. (name omitted) D. B. t. Desotoville B. T. (name omitted) and Dont let be like that war we had before. We will Given up this time till we will kill all the white Forks mens and women."

F. D. BARNEY, CLERK

(List of names amounting to 22).

"I close say Is try and Could note get any more and our Clerk wrote so bad I could not read it all to the Peoples so

I Don all could Doe and so I went to the Camp Groun and found it all right.

### READ THIS TO THEM.

General Jack turner meet in the chair and Capt. Moses turner to prepar a meeting of a club and Dear Friends we are com again to the Sec. War For our benefit in Choctaw County Ala and we are be on hand From 1878 on tell now and also we are ready now For our war and we want every B. t. in the county to be all right, and we only have 23 in no. in your B. t. and we will say to you all that we expect to kill all of white mens and women and Baby, and you of the cold, in your B. t. may Look out and we want our Friend the Bare of this to let nobody no into this while we have but 23 in your B. t. I think Desotoville B. t. is very a Bad place for Black people and we are going to have it to our hand before manny days and us look For our best way to Doe this thing. We Please that the 15 day of Sept. will be the best while all the white will be at Camp Meeting For we will a shi time any way and we have only 23 in your B. t. and on that Day we will let you all have 35 of our mens and you all must wact for selfs and we are all right down here in our ports and be shew to slay from Baby up to the oldes and have no man on this list that will Betray us like Huff Chaney did and dont take none of them Clu Kluck negro on your list for we are going to kill them too Please read this to ever one that join you and you must take sora, paper along with you to sign your members names on and on the 31 day of July you must go up to the Camp Meeting place and Look over the place that you may understand and I will taken Butler and Capt. turner tak Mt. Sterling and we have 800 guns in readines and I see all the Boys and their seems to be all right and say the 15 that are going to raly to the Polls and also I find here bout Desotoville the colored Friend are all Pretty much all of them are on the white Folks sid and it was hard to get these 23 up and also I meet with Mr....at the Camp Grounds night and I Look over the Paper and could read good and also (word obscure) you take this off to rewrite in the record Please have a good writer so that we can make out his hand write I learned that you are going to slay

from the baby up to the oldes and also you must Doe all you can in Butler that Day for it will be a good time."

F. D. BARNEY CLERK

"this our last meeting this side of our time and we are only have 23 members in desotoville Precinct and we are going take this County by Shedding Blood and we are going to slay from the young up to the oldes and Capt. Jack turner is going with his mens that night to Butler and Capt. and Capt. Moses turner will go up to the Camp Groun and Capt. Pete Hill will take his mens to Desotoville and Capt. Jesse Wilson will take his fens to the Mt. Sterling and you must all look out and be taking and we will meet on the 17 night Sept. For this will be our time when Every Body will have Preaching in minds Mr. Turner is our Gen and when we take this County we will pay him too."<sup>52</sup>

On Wednesday morning a meeting of the citizens of Butler was called and it was decided that warrant for a few of the leaders in the plot should be issued and the parties arrested and lodged in jail. This was promptly done, and the following negroes were arrested: Jack Turner, Jesse Wilson, F. D. Barney, Peter Hill, Range West, Willie Lyman, and Aron Scott.

On Thursday a mass meeting of between two or three hundred people agreed, after mature deliveration, to postpone action until Saturday, at which time all the citizens of the county, both black and white, were requested to meet and determine what should be done with the malefactors. About one thousand people of all classes accordingly assembled at Butler on Saturday and the evidence against the parties charged was submitted.<sup>53</sup> Captain A. J. Gray was elected chairman and Dr. Evan P. Harris and others made fiery speeches to which an answer was made by County Solicitor, George W. Taylor, and by Captain Joseph H. Knighton, "who pleaded earnestly that the law be allowed to take its course and that the negroes be

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<sup>52</sup>The Courier, Butler, Alabama, Wed., Aug. 23, 1882.

<sup>53</sup>DuBose, J. C., Alabama History, p. 193.



granted a regular trial in court.”<sup>54</sup> One cool headed man said his private opinion was that the people who made the laws could, in a desperate emergency, rightly take the law into their hands. By almost a unanimous vote it was decided that Jack Turner should be taken out of the jail and “hanged by the neck until dead.”

At about fifteen minutes after one o'clock the ceremony was performed. Jack was placed on Mr. Lenoir's buggy; the buggy was driven under a tree;<sup>55</sup> a rope was tied around his neck and thrown over a limb of the tree. Someone then asked Jack if he had anything to say, to which he persisted in a stubborn denial of the charges contained in the papers and said, “I will be a Democrat if you'll let me off.” He was told that this had nothing to do with politics, so the buggy was driven from under him, and he was left hanging for awhile in the middle of the main street of the town, with several hundred people looking on.<sup>56</sup> Jack Turner, who for eight years past had been the *bete noir* of the citizens of the county, breathed his last.

No one was disguised, no court action resulted, yet the chief participants of the Jack Turner affair were prominent men.

“The mighty and just indignation of the outraged people appreciating the insufficiency of the penalty meted out for such crimes, took the law in their own hands and Jack Turner sleeps the everlasting sleep, and will never again ruffle the current of this people's happiness.”<sup>57</sup>

The other negroes who had been arrested were carried to Livingston, Alabama, where they were placed in jail for safety. There arose considerable doubt about the character of the papers found at Desotville, and these prisoners were dismissed without trial.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>DuBose, J. C., *Alabama History*, p. 193.

<sup>55</sup>Note: This tree stands in front of the present bank of Butler.

<sup>56</sup>Seal, Hiram, Interview with author, Aug. 30, 1931.

<sup>57</sup>*The Courier*, Butler, Alabama, Aug. 23, 1882.

<sup>58</sup>DuBose, J. C., *Alabama History*, p. 193.

## CHAPTER III

## MOUNT STERLING AS AN EDUCATIONAL CENTER

The first inhabitants of Mount Sterling were well educated, many of them having attended colleges in North Carolina, in Virginia, and in New York; therefore, at an early date they were interested in establishing schools in this community.

Some of the wealthy planters employed tutors to teach their children, some of whom were sent to college. Some of the girls went to a school in La Grange, Georgia.

The census for Choctaw County in 1850 shows that there were fourteen common schools in the county in which two hundred and fifty-three scholars were enrolled. There was a male academy in Mount Sterling in which fifty-eight scholars were enrolled.<sup>1</sup> The official statistics for Choctaw County in the same year show twenty-eight schools, twenty-eight teachers, four hundred twenty pupils, and a public school fund of \$142.00.<sup>2</sup>

There was a small one-room school, the Catterlin School, in which Mrs. M. Lucy Nettles, who was a graduate of Judson College, taught for eight or nine years.<sup>3</sup> The first large school that we have any record for is the male academy, which was presumably established in 1847, as it occupied the first floor of a building in which the Masonic Lodge, Gilliad Number Eighty-one, was located.<sup>4</sup> The construction of this building was financed

by prominent men in the community since there was no public school fund at this time.

The male academy was known as the "Choctaw County Seminary". The *Sumter County Whig* carried the following announcement:

"We have been requested to state that the next Fourth of July will be celebrated at Mount Sterling, by the students

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<sup>1</sup>Census 1850 Winsor Spinks Census Taker of Choctaw Co.

<sup>2</sup>Statistics of 1950.

<sup>3</sup>Morgan, Mrs. Media Nettles, Letter to author, Oct. 30, 1930.

<sup>4</sup>*Sumter County Whig*, Livingston, Ala., June 10, 1851.

of the Choctaw County Seminary. The Declaration of Independence will be read by one of the students, and an oration delivered by another. A dinner, etc., will be prepared to which all are invited. Our friends at Mount Sterling, we have no doubt, will do the thing up brown."

This was the leading academy in the county between 1850 and 1853. It was very fortunate in having a most excellent principal, George Frederick Mellen.<sup>5</sup> Mr. Mellen was born in Brookfield, Massachusetts, prepared for college at Wilbraham Academy, and graduated from Wesleyan College at Middleton, Connecticut. He was about twenty-seven years of age when he went to Mount Sterling. He was remembered by one person for making a closing prayer at Kizer Hill Church, which he delivered in a rich, mellow, distinct voice. One sentence of this prayer was a quotation from Ecclesiastes, twelfth chapter:

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, there shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

A person had to associate with Dr. Mellen to understand and appreciate his real character. He was a fine scholar for his age, well versed in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English and Mathematics. He kept up his Hebrew studies daily as well as the languages which he taught. He did not spare himself in his work for his students. He could inspire great and noble purposes in the young and never troubled his students with many precepts and set rules.

"It was his custom on opening school in the morning to read something from the Bible and offer devout prayer in a full, earnest tone of voice. The students were rather a godless set of youths and did not stop to think much about his prayers; but they were generally respectful to him for they loved him."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Massey, John, **Reminiscences**, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup>Massey, John., **Reminiscences**, p. 61.

One of his pupils said:

“More religion gets into a boy through the devout teacher he loves than through any merely formal instruction that can be given. On the other hand, a powerful excuse is given for being irreligious when a brilliant and popular teacher practically ignores the subject.”<sup>7</sup>

In this school Mr. Mellen taught Davie's *Elementary Algebra*, Brown's *English Grammar*, Parker's *Natural Philosophy*, Whatley's *Logic*, *Original Compositions and Declamations*. His fine reputation at Mount Sterling influenced several young men to enter college at the University of Alabama.

In 1853 Mr. Mellen went to Pierce's Springs, Mississippi, as the first principal of the Goodman Institute. His going to this school drew patronage from Alabama and a new light dawned on that section of Mississippi.<sup>8</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Mellen, a few years later, went North where he entered the Theological Seminary at Andover, Massachusetts, to prepare for the ministry. He left the school at Pierce's Springs in charge of his brother, Seth S. Mellen, who had been one of Professor George Mellen's assistants.<sup>9</sup>

George and Seth Mellen made the academy, Goodman Institute, the most noted school in that part of East Mississippi. Mrs. Alice Hayes Mellen, George F. Mellens wife, was a brilliant and finely educated woman and an accomplished writer. She was a great help to Mr. Mellen, assisting him in the teaching of composition.

The Baptist people purchased the Choctaw County Seminary building at Mount Sterling in 1854 for their church, and then a new building, which was chartered by G. F. Smith as the Male Academy, was built. It was an adequate building for that period. There were two large rooms with a movable partition between them which could be raised when an auditorium was needed; and two smaller back rooms. There were two small

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<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, p. 61.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 62.

porches on the front, and from each was a door affording entrance into one of the large rooms.<sup>10</sup> Long seats and either "lift-top" or "front-slide" desks were used. The walls were plastered and were partly covered by black-boards and maps.<sup>11</sup>

The girls occupied the left or East large room, and were taught by Miss O. Cordelia DuBose who was a special friend of Mrs. Mellen; while the boys occupied the right or West room and were taught for a while by Professor Ben E. DuBose, later by Mr. Jones. The latter had a great deal of trouble with some of the boys who finally locked him out of the school building, whipped him, and ran him away. The next year Mr. McKee of Bladon Springs, who was a strong disciplinarian, taught here and established the prestige of the school.

One of the small back rooms was used for the teaching of art and music and the other one for the small children who were taught by older students in the academy.

Mrs. Margaret Mills, who was born in Mount Sterling in 1835, taught a private school for small children. She had attended Professor George F. Mellen's school in 1853. One of her pupils was Mrs. Media Nettles Morgan who later studied under Miss Cordelia DuBose in the Academy.<sup>12</sup>

At the close of the Civil War Mount Sterling people solicited and obtained another excellent teacher. He was John Massey. Mr. Massey was born December 16, 1834, near Melvin, Alabama, in Choctaw County. He was the son of Drury and Vashti Massey, who moved to Alabama in 1817 from Spartanburg, South Carolina.<sup>13</sup> He passed his boyhood on the farm and was taught to read at home. When he was thirteen years old he was a pupil of John James, an Irishman, whose large library for several years was at the disposal of the boy. John then taught a little school in the community for two years and was later, for six years, a student of Professors George and Seth Mellen at Pierce's Springs. He then assisted Prof. Mellen for two years,

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<sup>10</sup>Mills, Neil, Letter to author, Oct. 12, 1930.

<sup>11</sup>Wilcox, W. D., Interview with author, Aug. 28, 1930.

<sup>12</sup>Morgan, Mrs. Media N., Letter to author, Oct. 30, 1930.

<sup>13</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, p. 14.



and later taught a school of three months in his home community, for which he was paid eighty dollars. In 1859 he entered the University of Alabama and was graduated with honor from the Arts and Science Department in 1862. During the last half of his senior year at the University, he served by appointment of the Governor of Alabama as lieutenant in command of one of the companies of the cadet corps. At his graduation he was solicited by Dr. L. C. Garland, President of the University, to remain with the institution as assistance professor and instructor in military tactics. He declined the position in order to enter the Confederate States Army. He enlisted in Hilliard's Legion, and was appointed Adjutant of the First Battalion. He was distinguished for gallantry at Chikamauga, the first large battle of that command, which won for him a place on the roll of honor. He was twice wounded in that battle, while leading his battalion in the last charge up the heights of Snodgrass Hill, September 20, 1863. Early in 1864, at the request of the president and trustees of the University of Alabama and of the governor of the State, he was permitted to resign from the army and accept the position of instructor in tactics and assistant professor in the University, which was at that time considered the West Point of the Confederate States of America. He held that position until the University was destroyed by the enemy April 3, 1865, just before the close of the war.<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Massey then went to Jackson on personal matters, and from there to Tuscahoma and on to Mount Sterling. While there learned that the "old academy" was without a teacher and he decided to stay and assume charge of this institution. He said,

"I spent the night with Prof. Ben E. DuBose, who had once taught this school. He made the statement that he would dread to undertake the management of the boys' school in Mount Sterling because the boys were so bad."<sup>15</sup>

This made Professor Massey feel that the job was to be a difficult one, but he was accustomed to hard jobs after having

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<sup>14</sup>Owen, T. M., *History of Alabama*, Vol. IV, p. 1172.

<sup>15</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, p. 218.

taught at Pierce's Springs, and at the University of Ala.; and after having served as a Confederate soldier. He continued to wear his old dingy Confederate uniform until he had made enough money, by teaching, to procure more suitable clothes.

Professor Massey opened school the last of August and soon had forty pupils, the limit he had set. The boys were easy to manage, he said, because of three things:<sup>16</sup>

1. "I put my best service into the school."
2. "I had as pupils three young men who had been in the Confederate Army; two brothers, Maybanks and John Wesley DuBose, and Charles B. DuBose, a cousin of theirs, who set a fine example and aided in creating a loyal spirit in the school."
3. "The friendly influence of Miss O. C. DuBose, who was a teacher of strong character and who was principal of the Girls' School in the village."<sup>17</sup>

In this school Professor Massey taught classes in reading, grammar, rhetoric and composition; Latin through Caesar, Vergil, Horace; Greek through Xenophon and Homer; arithmetic, algebra, geometry, trigonometry; French. Spelling was taught to the whole school—both the large and the small pupils standing around the room. The one at the head of the class, when the class was dismissed, had to go to the foot of the class next day.

Professor Massey did his work satisfactorily to the patrons, but he had no time to devote to the study of law, the thing in which he was interested. Colonel D. S. Troy, of Montgomery, made arrangements to aid him in this study and to give him some clerical work at the same time, so he resigned his school work at Mount Sterling. The trustees of the Academy expressed themselves as well pleased, and Mr. W. D. Gaines, Chairman of the Board, complimented him and urged him to remain; however, he closed the school the first week in July, 1866.

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<sup>16</sup>Massey, John, **Reminiscences**, pp. 218-219.

<sup>17</sup>Note: Miss DuBose afterwards taught in Butler and Bladon Springs and on Aug. 9, 1871 married Dr. G. W. McElrath of Miss. in Marengo Co., Ala., by Rev. Thames. (Bladon Springs **Herald**, Aug. 16, 1871.)

He decided to refuse Colonel Troy's offer, choosing to accept the principalship of the male school at Summerfield, Alabama, where he remained from 1866 until 1874; then he taught in a high school in Mobile 1874-76; and was elected to the presidency of the Alabama Conference Female College at Tuskegee, in 1876, where he remained until 1909. While he was president of the Female College he said his "most important work was to study the girls themselves, their individualities, characteristics, needs along physical, mental and spiritual lines" . . . . "His life was dedicated to this supreme task through fifty years of service."<sup>18</sup> He was offered the presidency of Southern University at Greensboro; of the Girls Industrial School at Montevallo, and of the University of Alabama: all of these he declined.<sup>19</sup> He received his A. M. Degree from the University of Alabama in 1875, and the degree of Doctor of Law was conferred by the University in 1879.

At the age of seventy-five Dr. Massey retired and began to spend his leisure time in reading and study. Soon a request came from Dr. George F. Mellen, Junior, that he write a book of his life. At the age of eighty he began this book and as a result we have his *Reminiscences*. He died April 20, 1918, while living with one of his daughters, Mrs. B. B. Cobb, at Jacksonville, Florida; and was buried in Tuskegee, Alabama, April 22, 1918.<sup>20</sup>

After Mr. Massey left the Academy in Mount Sterling Mr. Tom Armstrong became its principal. He later became a Methodist minister serving charges in Louisiana. Later he became editor of the *Alabama Christian Advocate*, and a member of North Alabama Conference, M. E. Church, South.<sup>21</sup>

The following news articles will show that Professor Armstrong was highly esteemed in Mount Sterling:

"We regret to learn that our distinguished fellow citizen, Prof. Thos. Armstrong, of Mount Sterling, will leave us

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<sup>18</sup>Dallas, Miss Belle, Letter to author, Oct. 25, 1930.

<sup>19</sup>Owen, T. M., *History of Alabama*, Vol. IV, p. 1172.

<sup>20</sup>Owen, T. M., *History of Alabama*, Vol. III, p. 404.

<sup>21</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Aug. 26, 1874.

soon, to become a resident of Mansfield, La., having accepted the Presidency of a Female College at that place. Prof. Armstrong has made many warm friends in this county, who will sincerely regret his removal. He is an excellent teacher of many years experience, and we congratulate the people of Mansfield upon the acquisition of so valuable a member of society."

"In the removal of Mr. Armstrong from our county we feel that we have sustained a loss not easily to be repaired. We hope that he may find friends in his new home, and that he may prove as useful to Louisiana as he has been to Alabama. In giving him up we feel that we are called upon to make a sacrifice. He has been a good citizen, and faithfully discharged his duty at all times. Success to himself and family."

"Until the last four or five years Professor Armstrong has at different times had control of two colleges, one at Eutaw and the other at Marion, Alabama. His reputation is second to none in Alabama."<sup>22</sup>

Entertainments were sometimes put on by the faculty and students of the Mount Sterling Academy. Tableaus, frequently presented, provided one means of raising money for the maintenance of the school. The *Choctaw Herald* for November 16, 1866, carried the following announcement:

"We are indebted to young ladies of Mount Sterling for an invitation to a tableaux which is to be given by them at that place, this evening, at 8:00 o'clock, to raise funds for the female academy."<sup>23</sup>

Some of the scenes in this tableau were:

"Grand Musical, Beauties of Moonshine, Temptation, Hagar, Rebecca and Roena, Hay Making, Jealousy, Devotion, Midnight, The Youth Who Never Saw a Woman, Pocahontas Saving Captain Smith, The Old School Mam', All

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<sup>22</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 2, 1874.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, Butler, Alabama, Nov. 16, 1866.

Quiet Along the Potomac, Boys in Blue, and a pantomime called "Love in a Cottage".<sup>24</sup>

This performance was a great success, and the proceeds amounted to eighty dollars.<sup>25</sup>

Mount Sterling's most noted period as an educational center was during the period 1869 to 1880, when the Academy was under the supervision of Dr. Seth Smith Mellen and his able assistants, Vince West, Miss Ida Parsons, and Charlie Moody.<sup>26</sup> Mr. Mellen was born February 7, 1821, at Pelham, Massachusetts, and was a brother to Professor George F. Mellen who taught in Mount Sterling in 1853. He received his early education at Wilbraham Academy, and then attended Williams College where he received a B. A. Degree in 1843, under the presidency of Dr. Mark Hopkins. After his graduation he taught at Longstreet Academy, Twigg County, Georgia, from 1843 to 1851, at Goodman Institute, Clarke County, Mississippi, 1855 to 1869 and was induced to come to Mount Sterling by ten men who guaranteed him one thousand dollars for the first year with the understanding that the next year it was to run on its own merits.<sup>27</sup> He began teaching in Mount Sterling in September, 1869.

Mr. Mellen was five feet eleven inches in height, of superb form, black hair, which curled slightly, Roman nose and face, and large dark expressive eyes—together one of the handsomest men of the time.<sup>28</sup> He was qualified to teach everything and in addition had good common sense.<sup>29</sup> He was a talented speaker and it was said that he could have made a brilliant success in any of the professions if his taste had led him in that direction. He was a member of the Methodist Church, of

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<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, Butler, Alabama, Nov. 23, 1866.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, Butler, Alabama, Jan. 5, 1867.

<sup>26</sup>Note: Mr. Wash Taylor, a lawyer, taught or substituted for Mr. Mellen some when he had to be away. (Bruister, Ben)

<sup>27</sup>Note: He married Susan Huntington Bush, Aug. 24, 1848, of Westfield, Mass., who came South as a teacher in Faunsdale, Ala., where Mr. Mellen met her in the hospitalable home of Charles Walker. (Owen, T. M., *Hist. of Ala.*, Vol. IV, p. 1188.

<sup>28</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, p. 70.

<sup>29</sup>Bruister, Ben, Interview with author, Aug. 29, 1930.



the Masonic Lodge, of the Whig party at first and later of the Democratic Party, yet he was modest and did not like publicity. He was a teacher because he loved teaching better than any occupation; consequently his teaching was full of inspiration.

Professor Mellen taught in the same building which Professor Massey used, but he did not confine his teaching to only the school-room. He had several cottages built around his own home, and these were used for sleeping quarters for boarding students who came from a distance. Several of these cottages had two rooms and two fire places, and accommodated four to eight boys. The boys used the large central hall in the Mellen home at night as a study hall. It was here that Professor Mellen assisted the boys in preparing their lessons for the next day. The boys who stayed in the cottages ate their meals in a big dining room in the Mellen home. At times girls were invited to visit in the home and then the boys and girls had a great time. Some of the students were Ben Bruister, Bill Curtis, Hardy Hopper, Gaston Woodward (dead), Bill Woodward, John Woodward (in Oklahoma), Sydney Prince, J. J. Altman, Julian Waters, Wash Taylor, Tuck Goodman, Ed. Gray, Leo Bryant, Joel C. DuBose, Frank Keller, Ivey Lewis (died at University of Alabama with measles), Jerry Brown, R. N. Moody, A. J. Wood, Verdie Green, Lafayette Williams, Thad. L. Mathers, Eli Thornton (died with typhoid fever) Alice DuBose, Marilou Armstrong, B. D. Gray, (Pres. Georgetown College, in Kentucky) Reuben Gaines (Judge Supreme Court of Texas), George F. Mellen, Junior, H. M. Hooper.<sup>30</sup>

School began at 8:00 o'clock in the morning and was dismissed at 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon, with two fifteen minute recesses and one hour noon. An average of about seventy students attended this school, some of the boarding students being from Mobile, Marengo, Sumter, Washington, and Clarke Counties, and from the States of Mississippi and Arkansas.<sup>31</sup> Several students who lived at a distance rode to school in buggies or on horseback, and still others came in on Monday mornings and returned to their homes each-week-end. Most all the students

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<sup>30</sup>Bruister, Gray, Wilcox, Moody, R. N., O. Gray, Interviews with author, Aug. 29, 1930.

<sup>31</sup>DuBose, J. C., **History of Alabama**, pp. 164-173.

brought lunches to school, and at lunch time there was a great deal of pleasure in swapping lunches, then sitting on the mossy banks under the trees and eating them.<sup>22</sup>

Friday afternoons were devoted to compositions and speeches from the younger classes and great thunderous orations from the older students who were about ready for college. Often one could hear boys in the woods practicing their orations for these occasions.<sup>23</sup> Sessions closed about July with three days of public examinations and commencement exercises which included compositions, orations and a big dinner for the public.<sup>24</sup> For these occasions the Methodist Church was sometimes used as more people could be seated in it than in the school building.<sup>25</sup>

Each fall there was an announcement of the opening of school. A typical announcement follows:

"Mount Sterling Academy:

Prof. S. S. Mellen will commence his fall session on the third Monday in September. To persons having children or wards to educate we unhesitatingly recommend this as the best place to send them that we know of. The society is unexcelled and the discipline unsurpassed. Board and tuition reasonable."<sup>26</sup>

Professor Mellen sometime kept boys in at recess as punishment, and at times he would catch one of the boys by his hair and shake his head.<sup>27</sup> Occasionally he sent a boy for a

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<sup>22</sup>Cory, Mrs. Chappell, nee, Marielou Armstrong, Letter to author, Feb. 14, 1930.

<sup>23</sup>Note: On one of these occasions, Sam Armstrong, a small boy, gave an oration in the political parlance and style of that day which literally "brought down the house". The speech was written by his father in his wittiest and most telling style and was a sort of "take off" on his great friends and associates, George Washington Taylor and J. J. Altman, and other political speakers in the limelight. Some of these gentlemen had many a laugh over it afterwards. (Mrs. Chappel Cory.)

<sup>24</sup>DuBose, J. C., **Alabama History**, p. 172.

<sup>25</sup>Bruister, Ben, Interview with author, Aug. 29, 1930.

<sup>26</sup>**Choctaw Herald**, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 6, 1875.

<sup>27</sup>Sherrard, Mrs. Alice DuBose, Letter to author, Oct. 29, 1930.

switch to be used in punishing someone, and this was sometimes "ringed".<sup>38</sup> However, the boys respected Professor Mellen, and his name will live in the affectionate memories of hundreds of his pupils.

"He made no loud professions but his works will follow him in the betterment of mankind."<sup>39</sup>

Such games as cat, town ball, bull pen, jumping the rope, wrestling, and foot races were participated in by the students. Inter-school athletics was not known to them.

Professor Mellen was superintendent of education of the county 1872-1880, while he was teaching in Mount Sterling. He did not go out over the county very much, but people from the county came to him for advice. He was nominated also by acclamation as the candidate of the Democratic and Conservative Party for the Board of Education of the Fourth Congressional District at a meeting of delegates of the counties in the Fourth Congressional District at Selma, Alabama, July 31, 1874.<sup>40</sup> The following are instructions to trustees of free public schools while Dr. Mellen was superintendent of education of Choctaw County:

"No school can be begun or continued with less than an average of fifteen pupils. No teacher shall receive more than forty dollars per month for teaching a school of twenty pupils and not more than ten dollars for each additional ten pupils and no teacher shall receive more than sixty dollars per month."<sup>41</sup>

Professor Mellen went to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, in 1880 where he was co-principal with Mr. Alonzo Hill for three years in the Tuscaloosa Female Academy.<sup>42</sup> In 1883 to 1887 he was co-principal of the Boys Military School in Livingston, Alabama, 1885 to 1892, superintendent of education of Sumter County;

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<sup>38</sup>Wilcox, W. D., Interview with author, Aug. 28, 1930.

<sup>39</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, p. 70.

<sup>40</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 23, 1874.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, Feb. 26, 1874.

<sup>42</sup>Mellen, Fred, Letter to author, Dec. 11, 1930.

after which time he retired. In 1883 he received the honorary degree of LL. D. from the University of Alabama.

Dr. Mellen died May 30, 1893, and was buried at Livingston, Alabama. His memory is enshrined in the hearts of the people who placed this tribute on his tombstone:

"A beloved husband and father,  
A faithful friend,  
A consistent Christian.

He served well his day and generation  
And sleeps the sleep of the Just."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Read by author.

## CHAPTER IV

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

It is hardly possible to include in this history something about all the noted people who either lived at Mount Sterling or attended there. Yet, to pass over all of these without mentioning a few who have played such an important role in the history of the little town would leave the story incomplete. The purpose of this chapter is to give biographical sketches of a few characters who have not entered into the story thus far. These sketches are arranged alphabetically rather chronologically or according to prominence.

*George Hays Carnathan*, the son of William George and Theresa E. (Mayberry) Carnathan, was born on July 9, 1858, near Butler, Choctaw County, Alabama.<sup>1</sup> His father was born near Eutaw, Green County, Alabama, lived near Butler, and volunteered in Company F, Fortieth Alabama Regiment, of the Confederate States army.

He received his early education at Mount Sterling, and was graduated with the LL. B. Degree from the Law Department of the University of Alabama in 1878.<sup>2</sup>

He engaged in farming and in the practice of law in Butler, Alabama, and served as solicitor of Choctaw County from 1880 to 1886. He served as general administrator of that county from 1890 to 1904, and was a Democratic delegate to the constitutional convention in 1901.

He was a member of the Masonic Lodge and of the Woodmen of the World, and was enthusiastic in the work of these organizations.

Mr. Carnathan married Hester Anna Brewster of Butler, November 16, 1880, and the following children were born to them: Dr. William George, who married, September 6, 1906, Mary Harriet Craig of Macon, Mississippi, and lives at Butler,

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<sup>1</sup>Owen, T. M., **Dictionary of Ala. Biography**, Vol. III, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup>Palmer, T. W., **Register of Univ. of Ala.**, 1831-1901, p. 44.



Alabama; Benjamin Gilmer, pharmacist, Mobile, Alabama; Margaret Amelia, who is a school teacher and lives in Butler; Helen Brewster, who married Frank E. White of Womack Hill, Alabama; Wilkes Coleman, who lives in Butler; and Alla Velma, of Butler.

*Wiley John Carnathan* was born on December 18, 1836. He is the son of George M. Carnathan of Eutaw, and Penelope (Coleman) Carnathan, the former came from Ireland<sup>3</sup> and was a nephew of George Hays, who settled in Greene County, also of Jacob and Mary (Coleman) Mayberry of German descent, who lived at Centerville in Bibb County.

He attended the University of Alabama from 1857 to 1858. When the war between the States began he served as a private in the Confederate States Army. After the war he returned to Mount Strling where he became a planter and a tombstone agent.

He was married to Mattie Craig of Daleville, Mississippi.<sup>4</sup>

*Marielou Armstrong Cory* was born in Greensboro, Alabama and is the daughter of Thomas and Martha Louise (DuBois) Armstrong; the former, a noted educator, Methodist Minister, and editor; later taught and served churches in Alabama and in Louisiana, became editor of the *Alabama Christian Advocate*, and a member of North Alabama Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Mrs. Cory is noted for her beauty, talent and charm. She comes of a long line of distinguished ancestors from the French Huguenots of South Carolina and Virginia. She is the great, great granddaughter of Peter DuBois and Anne (Clarkson) Carne, descendant of Sir Edward Carne and Mary, daughter of Henry Earl of Worcester. She is the granddaughter of Harvel and Mary White (King) Armstrong and of John and Louise (Williams) DuBois.

She received her early education under the distinguished

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<sup>3</sup>Owen, Thomas M., *Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. III, p. 301.

<sup>4</sup>Palmer, T. W., *Register of Univ. of Ala.*, 1831-1901, p. 131.

educator, Dr. Seth Smith Mellen, at Mount Sterling, Alabama, and was later graduated with the degree of Master of Arts from Mansfield Woman's College, Louisiana.

She taught music and art in the public schools of Decatur, Alabama, and Birmingham, and was organist for churches in her father's ministerial charges.

She has been one of the foremost society and club women of Alabama, identified with the State's most beneficial activities and interesting movements, and has been very active in sociological legislation. She was instrumental in saving from defeat at the last moment, Mrs. R. D. Johnson's bill establishing the Alabama Boys Industrial School at East Lake. She is one of the founders of the Alabama Industrial School for Girls; and a member of the Board of Control of Alabama Girls Vocational School. She was vice president and a member of the legislative committee of the Alabama Federation of Women's Clubs and assisted in the formation of the Alabama Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, April 8, 1897, of which division she was president from 1911 to 1914. She is one of the organizers of the First White House of the Confederacy Association, and is now, and for twenty years has been, Regent of this Association.

During Mrs. Cory's Administration as president of the Alabama Division of the U. D. C. she inaugurated, in 1911, the movement to place Confederate markers at the University of Alabama. The boulder on the campus and the beautiful symbolic Tiffany window in the library, memorials to the boy-soldiers who defended the city of Tuscaloosa on the night of Croxton's raid and to other students of the Confederate Army who went out from the University halls, are the result of her long struggle for this recognition of the University students who became Confederate soldiers in the early "sixties".

Mrs. Cory is clever with brush and chisel. She is an accomplished musician, and a gifted speaker and writer. She is a member of the Birmingham Writers' Club and her book, *The History of the Memorial Association of Montgomery with Notes and Sketches*, is of literary and historic interest.

As Miss Armstrong she was married in Gadsden on November 26, 1890 to Chappell Cory, Managing Editor of the *Birmingham Age Herald*, and to this couple have been born the following children:<sup>5</sup> (1) Chappell Cory, Junior, who is now a lawyer in New York City. During the World War he served as Lieutenant with artillery corps. He is married to Eleanor Martin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Seth K. Martin of Tennessee: (2) Armstrong Cory, who served as Lieutenant in the Eighty-second Division during the World War and was wounded in action in France. He is studying at the Sorbonne in Paris for his Doctor of Philosophy Degree. He recently married in Paris, Mademoiselle Dina Gambara, of Bucarest, Parma, Italy: (3) Theresa Cory, who married Hudson Strode, writer, critic and professor of English at the University of Alabama.

This charming woman, who has meant so much to the history of our state, now lives in her beautiful home at Roebuck Springs, Birmingham, Alabama.

*Andrew Jackson Curtis*, the son of Robert LaFayette and Elizabeth (Dyer) Curtis, was born on December 20, 1829, in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. His father was born in Petersburg, Virginia, and moved to Alabama in 1836, where he settled near the forks of the Warrior and Tombigbee Rivers.

He obtained his early education in the country schools and entered college at Knoxville, Tennessee. After his graduation in 1849 he read medicine under his brother, Dr. Penton Curtis, at Panola, Mississippi, and completed his medical studies at Pennsylvania Medical University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, graduating with honors in 1851.

He went to Cuba to practice medicine and to observe the yellow fever epidemic which was raging on that island. He returned to the United States in 1853 and settled in Choctaw County, Alabama, where he practiced in partnership with Dr. Coleman. He travelled through the Northwestern and Western States prospecting, and in 1857 was a correspondent of the

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<sup>5</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Ala. Biography*, Vol. III, p. 404; Moore, A. B., *History of Ala. and Her People* Vol. III p. 600; Cory, Mrs. Chappell, Letter to author, Feb. 14, 1931.

Mobile *Mercury* and other newspapers and periodicals. Later he bought a plantation near Mount Sterling, Alabama, and engaged in farming.

He was a member of the Secession Convention in 1861, and was appointed surgeon of a company in the Confederate States Army under the command of Captain Wilkes Coleman, but was forced to resign this position on account of ill health. He sold his farm in 1870 and moved to Meridian, Mississippi, where he practiced medicine until his death, October 25, 1872.

He was a Democrat, a Mason and a Presbyterian.

He married Olivia Octavia Chaney, the daughter of George B. and Caroline (Ainsworth) Chaney of Sumter County, October 19, 1854, at Mount Sterling.<sup>6</sup>

*Charles Belts DuBose*, son of Clem and Esther Martha (Barnette) DuBose of Mount Sterling, was born March 9, 1840. He studied medicine while a young man and was an aid to surgeons in the Confederate States Army. After the war closed, he returned to his home in Mount Sterling and studied at the Male Academy under Dr. John Massey. He helped to create a loyal spirit in the school and occasionally assisted Dr. Massey with the teaching. At this time he was preparing for the ministry, and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church South Conference in 1867 and was a faithful preacher and teacher for several years.

He taught a school at Isney, Alabama, and while there married Sue Dozier. In 1879 he took charge of a church in Pensacola, Florida, and was the first minister to remain for four years.<sup>7</sup> His pastorate was distinguished in 1880 by the session of the Alabama Conference which was presided over by Bishop H. M. McTyeire.<sup>8</sup> When the yellow fever epidemic

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<sup>6</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Ala. Biography*, Vol. III, p. 446.

<sup>7</sup>Hoskins, F. W., *The History of Methodism in Pensacola, Fla.*, p. 78.

<sup>8</sup>"Condensed Version of Methodism in Pensacola", *Christian Advocate*, Sept. 25, 1930. Note: On Sat. night during the conference a disastrous fire visited the city, burned many homes, and caused the death of two people.

came, he sent his family away, but showed his heroic spirit by deliberately refusing to leave his afflicted people, most of whom were obliged to remain in the city. He and a Catholic priest were the only pastors left to minister to the sick and to bury the dead. He remained at his post of duty until he went down to death October 12, 1882, with this pestilence, and was buried in St. Michael cemetery on the shore of Pensacola Bay, "whose waves will sing his requiem until the morning of the Resurrection."<sup>9</sup>

*Joel Campbell DuBose* was born on December 18, 1855 at Gaston, Sumter County, Alabama. He was the son of Benjamin Eusebius and Sarah Elizabeth (Horn) DuBose, the former a native of Darlington, South Carolina, who lived at Mount Sterling and was a school teacher and planter. He was the grandson of Benjamin and Susanna (Campbell) DuBose of Darlington, and of Isaac and Martha (Vines) Horn of Kinterbish, Choctaw County. His paternal ancestors were, on the one side, French Huguenots who came to South Carolina in 1685, and on the other side, Scotch. His mother's people came from North Carolina.<sup>10</sup>

He received his early education at Gaston and later at Mount Sterling under the noted educator, Professor S. S. Mel-  
len. Later he matriculated at the University of Alabama and was graduated with an A. B. Degree in 1878, and an M. A. Degree in 1882.<sup>11</sup>

He was principal of the Pushmataha High School from 1878 to 1883; of the school at Snow Hill from 1883 to 1886; at Livingston, 1886; 1888; at South Highlands, Birmingham, Alabama, 1888-1898; in charge of private classes and literary work, Washington, D. C., 1898-1899; conducted a private school at Knoxville, Tennessee, 1899-1900; and was principal of "DuBose School for Boys" in Birmingham for many years.

He was elected to the State Legislature from Jefferson County in 1903 and served in that body until 1907. While Prof.

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<sup>9</sup>Massey, John, *Reminiscences*, p. 219.

<sup>10</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dic. of Ala. Hist. Biography*, Vol. III, p. 510.

<sup>11</sup>Palmer, T. W., *Register of Univ. of Ala.*, 1831-1901, p. 244.



DuBose was a member of the Legislature he was appointed to fill a new and most important chair created at the University of Alabama—that of professor of secondary education. Through the influence of Dr. John W. Abercrombie, at that time president of the University of Alabama, the General Education Board of New York City was induced to provide for the salary and expenses of this executive whose duty it would be to create a sentiment over the entire state for the establishment, support and improvement of high schools. When Prof. DuBose was given this new chair, he stumped the State in advocacy of a law establishing County High Schools. "His eloquent appeals, emanating out of a rich faith, proved by his works in the education of boys and girls, bore fruit when the next legislature met."<sup>12</sup> In August, 1907, the legislature passed an act providing for a county high school in each county, upon the conditions that the people of the county give fifty acres of land, construct and equip a building worth \$5000.00 and deed this property to the State. Thirty-one county high schools were established during the first year.

Mr. DuBose was a gentleman of high moral character and of more than ordinary literary attainments.<sup>13</sup> He is the author of *Sketches of Alabama History*, *Notable Men of Alabama*, *Alabama History*, "Aeschylus and the Seven against Thebes",<sup>14</sup> and the "Story of Alabama".<sup>15</sup> He was business manager and one of the proprietors of the *Gulf States Historical Magazine*, Montgomery, Alabama; and a contributor to other periodicals.<sup>16</sup>

He was married August 8, 1883, to Alice Vivian, daughter of William T. and Elizabeth J. Horn, of Pushmataha, Alabama. To this couple were born the following children: (1) Benjamin William, who married Mary Rowens Brust and lives in Memphis, Tennessee; (2) Alice Vivian, who is a teacher in Memphis; (3) Martha Mortimore, who married Reverend R. M. Howell and lives in Birmingham; (4) Rosa Florence, who married Jack Mills and lives in Mount Sterling; (5) Frederick Mellen, who

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<sup>12</sup>Moore, A. B., *History of Alabama and Her People*, Vol. I, p. 812.

<sup>13</sup>*The Courier*, Butler, Ala., Jan. 20, 1883.

<sup>14</sup>*Methodist Review*, September-October, 1899.

<sup>15</sup>*Pearson's Magazine*, June, 1902.

<sup>16</sup>*Alumnae News*, Univ. of Ala., Sept., 1917.

died May 15, 1891; (6) Joel Campbell, who died September 26, 1886.

Prof. DuBose died February 6, 1917, at his home in Roebuck Springs, Birmingham, and is buried in Birmingham.

*Reuben Reid Gaines* was born on October 30, 1836, at Williams Cross Roads, Choctaw County. He was the son of Joab and Lucinda (McDavid) Gaines. He received his preparatory training in private schools and at Mount Sterling and was graduated with an A. B. degree from the University of Alabama in 1855.<sup>17</sup> He studied law at Cumberland University at Lebanon, Tennessee, and was graduated with an LL. B. Degree in 1857.

He practiced law at Selma until 1862, when he enlisted in the Confederate States Army and served as Adjutant of the Third Alabama Cavalry, 1862-1863; Assistant Adjutant in General Morgan's Brigade, and Allen's Division, 1863-1864; Assistant Adjutant General in Allen's Division of Cavalry 1864-1865. After the war he resumed his law practice in Clarksville, Texas, in partnership with Colonel B. H. Epperson. He was elected judge of the Sixth Judicial District of Texas in 1877; served as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, 1885-1894, and as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas from 1894 to January 5, 1911, when he retired on account of failing health.

He was a Democrat, an Episcopalian, a member of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, and an Odd Fellow.

He married, March 1859, Louisa, daughter of Hon. George D. and Elizabeth (King) Shortridge, who lived at Montevallo, Shelby County, Alabama. Their only child is Lelia Shortridge, Galveston, Texas. His last residence was Austin, Texas, at which place he died on October 13, 1914.<sup>18</sup>

*Vivian Pendleton Gaines* was born on September 21, 1852, at Mount Sterling. He was the son of George Washington and

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<sup>17</sup>Palmer, T. W., *Register of Univ. of Ala.*, 1831-1901, p. 114.

<sup>18</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Vol. III, p. 628.



### GAINES HOUSE

Eliza V. (Earle) Gaines, who were engaged in farming and the warehouse business at Tuscahoma Landing.

He received his early education in Mount Sterling, attended Centenary Institute at Summerfield, graduated from the Medical Department of the University of Alabama in 1872, and from the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, in 1873.<sup>19</sup>

He practiced medicine at Mount Sterling 1873 to 1886, and then moved to Mobile where he practiced and served as a clinical lecturer on obstetrics in the Medical Department of the University of Alabama.

He was a member of the State Medical Association, State Board of Health, State Medical Examining Board, and of Mobile County Medical Association.

He was a Democrat, a Methodist, an Odd Fellow, Knight of Pythias, and Mason, and the author of "Central America and Panama Canal", 1913.

He married March 7, 1879, at Summerfield, Margaret Car-

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<sup>19</sup>Palmer, T. W., **Register of Univ. of Ala.**

oline, daughter of Netherland and Caroline Porter (Childers) Tate, both natives of Georgia. They have the following children: (1) Lila Earle who married Warner Clifford Clisby, and lives in Birmingham, Alabama; (2) Carrie Tate, who married Richard Raymond Callen and lives in Birmingham; (3) Helen May; (4) Maggie Bell who is dead; and (5) Henry L.<sup>20</sup>

Dr. Gaines dropped dead November 27, 1923, while in Mount Sterling on a hunting trip. He was buried in Magnolia Cemetery, Mobile, Alabama, Nov. 28, 1923.<sup>21</sup>

*James Edward Gray* was born in 1860 at De Sotoville, Alabama. He was the son of Captain Alanson Jefferson and Elizabeth Jane (Nethery) Gray.<sup>22</sup> The former died April 27, 1883, and was buried at Mount Sterling, Alabama.

He received his early education at DeSotoville, and for five years was a student of the noted Professor Seth S. Mellen at Mount Sterling. After his graduation from the University of Alabama with an A. B. Degree in 1878 he taught school for two years in Sumter County. Two years later he returned to the University and received his L.L. B. Degree in the spring of 1882. He was admitted to the bar in the fall of 1882. Just after this admission to the Alabama bar he contracted typhoid fever and died February 19, 1883.<sup>23</sup>

*Charles Howard Mellen* was born in 1861 at Pierce's Springs, Mississippi, and is the son of Professor Seth S. and Susan H. (Bush) Mellen. He received his early education under his father at Pierce's Springs, Mississippi, and at Mount Sterling, Ala. In 1878 he entered the Junior class at the University of Alabama and graduated with an A. B. Degree from the College of Arts and Science in 1880.

He was principal of the high school at Summerfield in

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<sup>20</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Ala. Biography*, Vol. III, p. 629.

<sup>21</sup>Mobile *Register*, Nov. 28, 1923.

<sup>22</sup>Palmer, T. W., *Register of University of Ala.*, p. 291.

Moore, A. B., *History of Ala. and Her People*, Vol. II, pp. 601-602.

<sup>23</sup>The *Courier*, Butler, Ala., Feb. 24, 1883.



1881 and 1882, but his services were ended by his death in Tuscaloosa, December 27, 1882.<sup>24</sup>

*George Frederick Mellen* was born on June 27, 1859 at Pierce's Springs, Clarke County, Mississippi. He was the son of Prof. Seth Smith and Susan Huntington (Bush) Mellen, received his early education at Goodman Institute and at Mount Sterling, and was prepared for college by his father and Judge George Washington Taylor. He entered the University of Alabama in 1877 and was graduated with an M. A. Degree in 1879. He specialized in Latin, Greek and Mathematics, and received the first prize offered by the Early English Text Society of Great Britain for the best examination in Anglo-Saxon, and also received the first prize which was offered by the New Shakespeare Society of Great Britain for the best examination in Shakespeare.

He did graduate work in the University of Leipsic, Germany, wrote his dissertation on "Monograph on Some Popular Errors in Education in the United States and Their Remedy", and received his Ph. D. Degree October 30, 1890.

He returned to the United States and taught school in the Gainesville Academy, 1879-1882; with his father in the Boy's Military School at Livingston, 1882-1885; and in Demopolis 1887-1891. He was professor of Greek and French in the University of Tennessee 1891-1898; and of Greek and history 1898-1900; but on account of ill health resigned this position and retired to private life on his farm.

He was a Democratic member of the Tennessee Legislature 1905-1907.

He collaborated with William Rule in *A History of Knoxville*, 1900; with Henry N. Ingersol in a *Memorial Volume* which contains a sketch and choicest writings of Joshua W. Caldwell. He prepared three chapters for Volume VIII in *The South in the Building of the Nation*; was a contributor to *Southern Humorists*, *Southern Editors*; *Knoxville Sentinel*, *Chattanooga News*;

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<sup>24</sup>Palmer, T. W., *Register of U. of A.*, 1831-1901, p. 259.



*New England Magazine, Methodist Review, Nashville Tennessean, Sewanee Review*, and other daily and weekly newspapers.

He was married July 7, 1885, to Mary Briscoe, daughter of Cyrus Briscoe and Eliza J. (Van de Graff) Baldwin, of Houston, Mississippi. Their children are: (1) Seth Baldwin, (2) Helen Van de Graff, (3) George Frederick, Junior, and (4) Cornelia Daniel.

His last days were peacefully spent on his farm near Knoxville, Tennessee. He died in Knoxville, June 4, 1927.<sup>25</sup>

*Charles Edward McCall* was born on November 21, 1867, at De Sotoville, Choctaw County, Alabama. He was the son of Dr. Daniel and Nancy Elizabeth (Thompson) McCall and the grandson of John and Mary (Campbell) McCall; and of Benjamin and Sarah Meniffee (Davis) Thompson. John McCall was a native of Scotland who emigrated to South Carolina then moved to Florida and on to Alabama where he died. Benjamin Thompson lived in Hale, Autauga and Choctaw Counties in Alabama.

Mr. McCall received part of his early education in Prof. Seth S. Mellen's school at Mount Sterling, and then continued his higher education in the Cooper Institute at Daleville, Mississippi, and in the University of Alabama. He graduated from the latter with an A. B. Degree in 1885.<sup>26</sup>

He taught for ten years as principal of high schools and academies. He was the founder and editor of the *Choctaw Advocate*, Butler, Alabama, 1890-92, and established this weekly newspaper so securely that it still has a large number of subscribers.

He became probate judge of Choctaw County in 1898 and held this office until he was admitted to the bar in 1908. He spent the next two years as assistant examiner of public accounts of Alabama, until April 1, 1911, he was appointed chief examiner of public accounts in which capacity he has served

<sup>25</sup>Mellen, Henry L., Letter to author, Dec. 11, 1930.

<sup>26</sup>Palmer, T. W., *Register of Univ. of Ala.*, 1831-1901, p. 292.

under the appointments of six governors, and was recently appointed assistant State examiner of this department.<sup>27</sup>

He is a Methodist, Royal Arch-Mason, past Chancellor of Knights of Pythias, Woodman of the World, a member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, and of the Sigma Nu fraternity.

He married Mary Rebecca Collins, daughter of James Madison and Amanda (Etheridge) Collins of Collinsville, Mississippi,<sup>28</sup> and they have the following children: (1) Major Charlie Campbell McCall, former Attorney General and now assistant Attorney General of Alabama; (2) Honorable Willard McCall, former Assistant Attorney General of Alabama, and now with Fort, Beddow and Ray, Attorneys in Birmingham; (3) Mrs. Mary Henderson of Montgomery.

*Carroll T. Prince* was born August 28, 1882, in Mount Sterling, Alabama. He is the son of Major Sydney T. Prince and Helen (Rhodes) Prince, who moved to Mobile when Carroll was five years old.

He attended the public schools of Mobile county, graduated at the University Military School of Mobile, and from the Law Department of the University of Alabama in 1910,<sup>29</sup> and for two years was private secretary to Congressman George Washington Taylor.

He began practicing law and was employed by the Mobile and Ohio Railroad Company, first as Law Agent, then as Personal Injury Attorney, and later as Attorney of the entire System, and is now Solicitor of the System, with headquarters in Mobile.<sup>30</sup>

He has been rather active in State and County political affairs, but has never run for an office. He married, April 1, 1924, Miss Jean Welch of New York and they have one son.

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<sup>27</sup>McCall, Charlie C., Letter to author, March 9, 1931.

<sup>28</sup>Owen, T. M., **History of Alabama**, Vol. IV, p. 1087.

<sup>29</sup>Prince, Carroll T. Letter to author, March 11, 1931; **Register, Univ. of Ala.**

<sup>30</sup>Prince, C. T., Letter to author, March 11, 1931.

*Sydney Trotter Prince*, was born May 20, 1847, at Bladon Springs, Alabama. He was the son of Thomas McCarroll and Lucy Anthony (Trotter) Prince.

He was a member of the cadet corps at the University of Alabama and left the institution in order to join the Confederate States Army. With two other cadets, he organized a company of cavalry from military cadets, and was elected second lieutenant of the company. He commanded this company under General Forrest, during Wilson's raid through Alabama, as his captain was absent at this time. He later received the rank of brevet major.<sup>31</sup>

At the close of the war he went to Mount Sterling and entered the mercantile business. He spent his spare moments studying law and was admitted to the bar in Choctaw county in 1875 and practiced law in Butler until 1880, from which place he moved to Mobile and entered a partnership with Harry T. Toulmin and George W. Taylor, under the firm name of Toulmin-Taylor and Prince. This firm dissolved in 1887 and Mr. Prince continued his practice alone.

He represented the Twenty-seventh Senatorial District composed of Choctaw, Washington and Clarke Counties, in the state Legislature in 1875 and was member of the Constitutional Convention of 1875, at which time he introduced some of the most important measures considered in the convention.<sup>32</sup> He served as a Democratic presidential elector on the Tilden ticket in 1876, and on the Cleveland ticket in 1884.

He was an Episcopalian and took an active part in religious services, and was also a Mason.

He married May 20, 1873, Helen Maria Rhodes, daughter of James and Maria Edna (Kornegay) Rhodes, who moved from Goldsboro, North Carolina to Bladon Springs, Alabama. The following children were born to this couple: (1) Annie, who married Dr. Eugene DuBose Bondurant, Mobile, Alabama;

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<sup>31</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Vol. IV, p. 1391.

<sup>32</sup>*Choctaw Herald*, Butler, Alabama, October 4, 1875.

(2) Sydney Rhodes, of Mobile; Carroll Thomas, of Mobile, and  
(5) Mary Kate, who married William Norman Hunter of Mobile.

Mrs. Prince died April, 1887, and Mr. Prince died at Mobile, January 7, 1910.

*Thomas McCarroll Prince* was born in 1807 in North Carolina. He was graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1827, and moved to Mobile, Alabama, where he was a merchant in the commission house of Prince and Garrett.

“He spent two years in Liverpool, England, as a member of a large commercial house there for the transaction of American business, pursuant to the recommendations of a convention of Southern planters which was held in Macon, Georgia, in 1839, so as to obtain advances on the cotton crop through the agency of post notes, and to secure good prices for the cotton by holding the stock until it was demanded for immediate consumption by spinners. Among the agencies in Europe for the sale of American cotton, and for the carrying out of the plan agreed upon, was the House of Fontaine, Prince and Company.”<sup>33</sup>

He was elected to the State Legislature from Mobile County in 1840 and reelected in 1845. He then moved to Choctaw County and in 1855 defeated Hon. William Woodward to represent Sumter, Choctaw and Washington Counties in the State Senate. He was a Whig.

*Thomas McCarroll Prince, Junior*, was born July 28, 1842, and is the son of Thomas McCarroll and Lucy Anthony (Trotter) Prince of Choctaw County, Alabama.

He was a lieutenant Colonel of the Twenty-Second Regiment of Alabama Volunteer Infantry in the Confederate States Army;<sup>34</sup> and was slightly wounded by an accidental explosion

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<sup>33</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Ala. Biography*, Vol. IV, p. 1391.

<sup>34</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Ala. Biography*, Vol. IV, p. 1391.

of an ammunition chest on April 8, 1863, at Battery Wagner, Morris Island, while there with the South Carolina Artillery which was commanded by Major C. K. Huger.<sup>35</sup>

After the War of Secession, he became a planter at Louisville, Ky.

He married Gertrude Ingersoll at Mobile in 1867, and died in 1869.

*Frank Singleton Stone* was born October 3, 1839, at Bladon Springs, Choctaw County, Alabama. He was the son of Captain Sardine Graham Stone, who moved to Mobile in 1847.

He received his early education in Mobile and at the age of twelve he entered the ship yard of J. D. Howard, of Jeffersonville, Indiana, for the purpose of learning the shipyard business. A year later he went to Mississippi where he completed his literary studies under Alexander Demitry.

In 1854 he returned to Mobile and worked as a shipping clerk on the "Ben Lee" one of the Tombigbee River boats which carried freight for St. Stephens, Tuscahoma, Gainesville and other landings along the river. In 1858 he was on the "Eliza Battle" when it caught on fire. He saved several lives during this tragedy and was later commended by rescued persons and received a gold medal from the Masons of the State. In 1864 he became captain of "The Admiral" steamer, and later had command of a company of boats.

He retired to "Montrose", his home in Baldwin County and became widely known as a scientific horticulturist.

He married September 4, 1862, Mary, daughter of Dr. Augustus C. Hawkins, and they have the following children: (1) Frank S. Junior, who was a student at the University of Alabama from 1880 to 1883, received his LL.B at the University of Georgia in 1886; was clerk of the supreme court of Georgia from 1887 to 1888; Solicitor of Baldwin County, 1894 to 1899; tax commissioner of Baldwin County, 1899 to 1900; (2) Mary

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<sup>35</sup>War Reports, Series 1, Vol. XIV, p. 276.



Stone, who is dead; (3) Robert O. Stone, of Baldwin County.<sup>36</sup>

*George Washington Taylor* was born in Montgomery County Alabama. He was the son of Edward F. and Anne Sewell (Trezevant) Taylor, both natives of Columbia, South Carolina.

He received his preparatory education in the best private schools of Montgomery and Columbia, South Carolina, and was graduated in 1867 from South Carolina College at Columbia. He taught school in Mobile, Alabama, during which time he read law under Hon. Harry T. Toulmin and was admitted to the bar November, 1871. He then practiced law in Choctaw County and in Marengo County.

He was elected to the Alabama Legislature in 1878 and for State solicitor for the First Judicial Circuit, November 1880, in which place he served for six years and was re-elected. In November, 1896, he was elected to Congress from the first District and was successfully re-elected for nine terms, making a total of eighteen years in the position.<sup>37</sup>

He wrote the first primary elections regulations in the Democratic party organization adopted in Alabama for party government in Choctaw County. He was Democratic chairman of the Choctaw executive committee for several years, and chairman of the State Democratic Convention which called the constitutional convention in 1901.

He entered the Confederate Army, November, 1864, as a member of the South Carolina State troops and later served until the end of the war in Company D, First South Carolina Cavalry regiment.

He married January 13, 1881, Margarett V. T., daughter of E. H. and Mary Jane (Bonner) Metcalf of Montgomery.

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<sup>36</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Ala. Biography*, Vol. IV, p. 1628.

<sup>37</sup>Owen, T. M., *Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, Vol. IV, p. 1649.

## CONCLUSION

A century has passed away since white people began to settle in Mount Sterling. During this time the Indians have been removed; the great forests have been cleared for plantations, some of which have reverted to woods while others produce bontiful crops of corn, cotton, peas and other farm products; the little town is more centralized, having only one gin and two stores for the community rather than one for each plantation; a garage occupies the place of the old blacksmith shop; and a gravelled road takes the place of the old Indian trail—post road between Tuscahoma and Butler.

The mighty Tombigbee flows on more dependable than in former days because of locks which make it navigable all the year for steamers. The remains of the old freight shute and warehouse at Tuscahoma landing are still visible, but with the exception of timber very few products are shipped from this landing.

Many negroes live in and around Mount Sterling, but these are peaceable, and most of them either rent land from the white people or work on shares with them.

The original Baptist and Methodist Churches, as well as many of the old colonial homes, are still standing; and a small but more modern school building, which was constructed from the materials of the old academy, is located on the same lot on which the academy stood.

The old "wash hole" of the S. S. Mellen school boys, better known as "Lassiter Mill Pond" is still in use as a swimming pool and as a baptismal place for the Mount Sterling and Hope-well churches.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the people who live there are descendants of the early families of Mount Sterling and own part of the original family property. In spite of the fact that some of the inhabitants became prominent lawyers, doctors, preachers, and business men, those who are living like to spend their vacations around their old home places, hunting, fishing, and enjoying the pleasant breezes, the good water, and the quietness of the community.

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<sup>1</sup>Choctaw Advocate, Butler, Alabama, Sept. 14, 1930.

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Beauchamp, George A., Grand Secretary Grand Lodge, A. F. &  
A. M. of Alabama. Montgomery, Ala.

Carnathan, Mrs. W. George, II, Butler, Alabama.

Coleman, Arch. First Assistant Post-Master General, Post Of-  
fice Department, Washington, D. C.

Collins, Floyd, Teacher in Mt. Sterling after 1882. College Point,  
Florida.

Cory, Mrs. Chappell, (See Biographies p. 66). Birmingham,  
Alabama.

Culling, Margaret, Secretary to Board of Education, Knoxville,  
Tenn.

Dallas, Belle, Niece of Mrs. John Massey and teacher under  
Dr. Massey at Tuskegee. Boligee, Alabama.

Gray, Peter, Captain on Steamboat-Tombigbee River, Mobile,  
Ala.

Harrell, A. G., Agriculture Agent, Choctaw County, Butler,  
Alabama.

Lindsey, W. H., Probate Judge. Butler, Alabama.

Mellen, Fred, Brother of George Mellen and son of S. S. Mellen,  
Livingston, Alabama.

Mills, Miss Neil, Teacher. Mount Sterling, Alabama.



Morgan, Mrs. Media Nettles, Daughter of M. L. Nettles, Mobile, Alabama.

McCall, Charlie C., Attorney General, Montgomery, Alabama.

Prince, Carroll T., Son of Maj. S. T. Prince (Graduated from U. of Alabama, 1910) Mobile, Alabama.

Sherrard, Mrs. Alice DuBose, Sister of Joel C. DuBose. Sherrard, Miss. Died 1932.

Smith, Abbie, Daughter of G. Frank Smith. Houston, Texas.

Turner, Miss Lizzie. Mount Sterling, Alabama.

Willis, Pearle, Los Angeles, California.

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Bruister, Ben, Pupil of S. S. Mellen. Butler, Alabama.

DuBose, Mrs. Emma, wife of A. O. DuBose, (Blind since 1872. Died February 26, 1931—Age 83) Mount Sterling, Ala.

Gray, Oscar L., Lawyer. Butler, Alabama.

Lindsey, W. H., Probate Judge, Butler, Alabama.

Mills, Mrs. Florence DuBose, Daughter of Joel C. DuBose. Mount Sterling, Alabama.

Moody, R. N. Former Editor of Choctaw Advocate for 46 years. Butler, Alabama.

Seale, Hiram. At one time resident of DeSotoville. (Died February 20, 1931. Isney, Alabama.

Taylor, Mrs. Cora Spinks, Daughter of Winsor Spinks. (Died January 14, 1931—Age 80). Butler, Alabama.

Turner, Misses Mary and Lizzie, Residents of Mount Sterling since about 1855.

Ulmer, Oliver Cromwell, Surveyor and Accountant—Age 83. Butler, Ala. Died 1931 (Summer)

Wilcox, Willie D., Pupil of S. S. Mellen. Butler, Ala.

## INDEX

## Volume 24

1962

\* \* \* \*

## —A—

Alabama History Commission .....	1
Alabama Map .....	131
Alabama-Mississippi Boundary .....	117-123
Alabama Territory, Census .....	127
Establishment of .....	97-128
Towns .....	128
An Alabama Literary Movement .....	32-39
Archives and History, Ala. Dept. of .....	1-15
Library .....	129-130
Autographs .....	62-64

## —B—

Black Belt, Diseases in .....	52-61
Boundary between Alabama and Mississippi .....	117-123
Brannon, Peter A. ....	1-15, 65-67

## —C—

Centennial Additions to Archives Library .....	129-130
Crowell, Col. John .....	107, 125

## —D—

DeLeon, Thomas Cooper .....	40-51
-----------------------------	-------

Diseases in the Alabama Black Belt .....	52-61
Durham, Frances .....	32-39

## —E—

Earle, Frank .....	62
James, Autograph .....	63

## —F—

Five Confederates; The Sons of Bolling Hall .....	133-221
Fletcher, Josiah, Autograph .....	63
Forrest, Gen. N. B., Railroad Building .....	16-31

## —H—

Halbert, Henry S. ....	7-8
Hall, Bolling .....	138
Family .....	138-151
Bolling II .....	138
Bolling III .....	138
Crenshaw .....	138
James A. ....	138
John E. ....	138
Thomas B. ....	138
Hook-worm .....	58

## —J—

Jay, John C. ....	16-31
-------------------	-------

Jones, Charles T., Jr.	133-221
Sketch of	221

## —L—

Lattimore, William	125
Literary Movement, An Alabama	32-39

## —M—

MacDowell Club	90-95
Melish Map of Alabama	131
Mobile, Territory of, Established	98-105
Mississippi-Alabama Boundary	117-123
Mississippi Territory, Census	126
Mitchell, David Bryde, Autograph	63
Music Clubs of Troy, History	68-96
Muster at Sawonogi	65-67

## —O—

Owen, David	65
Thomas M.	1-15

## —P—

Pen Women	32-39
-----------	-------

## —R—

Rainer, Olivia	68-96
----------------	-------

## —S—

Samford, Gov. Wm. J., Message of	1-3
Sawonogi, Muster at	65-67
Sisk, Glenn N.	52-61

Smallpox	58
Stone, Dr. Thomas J.	68
Tait, Judge Charles	102, 124
Territory of Alabama, Establishment of	97-128
Toulmin, Harry	124
Troy Music Clubs, History	68-96
True Blues	67
Typhoid Fever	58

## —W—

Walker, John Williams	124
Williams, Benjamin B.	40-51

## —Y—

Yellow Fever	53
--------------	----

## INDEX

## Volume 25

1963

\* \* \* \*

## —A—

- Accessions to Dept. of  
Archives and History .....294-296
- Alabama State Currency,  
1861-1865 .....70-98
- Antrim, Earl .....190-191
- Archives and History,  
Accessions .....294-296

## —B—

- Baine, Col. David William .....119
- Bears, Edwin C. ....7-48
- Belser, Thomas A., Jr. ....136-148
- Bicentennial, 1763 .....287-293
- Blue, Mathew Powers .....242-245
- Bonapartists in  
Alabama .....227-241
- Cahaba Military  
Cemetery Interments .....192-196
- Capitol in Montgomery .....242-245
- Carnathan, George Hays .....348
- Wiley John .....349
- Change Bills, Treasury  
Note .....83-98
- Civil War Poems of  
Alexander Beaufort  
Meek .....114-119
- Colbert, George .....205
- Levi .....209

- Colbert Ferry and  
Selected Documents .....203-226
- Confederate Prison at  
Montgomery, Ala. ....190-191
- Confederate Soldier,  
Money Matters .....49-69
- Cory, Marielou Armstrong .....349
- Currency, Alabama State .....70-98
- Curtis, Andrew Jackson .....351

## —D—

- Dent, John Herbert .....136
- John Horry, and  
Reconstruction .....136-148
- DuBose, Charles Belts .....352
- Euba Eugenia .....297-368
- Joel Campbell .....353

## —F—

- Forgotten Bicentennial,  
1763 .....287-293

## —G—

- Gaines, George Strother .....305
- Reuben Reid .....355
- Vivian Pendleton .....355
- Garrott, Isham Warren .....119
- Georgia Confederate  
Soldier Visits  
Montgomery .....99-113

Glover, Harry L. ....316

Gray, James Edward ....357

—H—

Hale, Lt. Col. Stephen  
Fowler .....119

Henson, John W. ....311

Hobbs, Capt. Thomas  
Hubbard .....119

Holt, Angeline Caroline .....49

Hiram Tolbert .....49

Hooper, Johnson Jones .....121

Howard, Milo B., Jr. ....70-98

—I—

Inge, Col. Richard Freer .....119

Irby, Col. Thomas Evans .....119

—J—

Jackson, Carlton .....246-253

Jewell, Major  
Origen Sibley .....119

Jones, Allen W. ....99-113

Col. Egbert J. ....119

Virginia K. ....254-261

—L—

Lay, Mrs. Orville .....149

LeVergy, Sidney Lee .....149

Lomax, Col. Tennent .....119

Long, Durward ....120-135,262-279

Lyon, Anne Bozeman .....227-241

—M—

Marietta National  
Cemetery .....192-196

Martyrs of the South.....116-119

McCall, Charles Edward.....259

Meek, Alexander  
Beaufort .....114-119

Meigs, Return J. ....219

Mellen, Charles Howard .....357

George Frederick .....358

Meminger, Christopher G. ....73

Mobile Rifle Co. ....149-189

"Money Matters" of a Con-  
federate Soldier .....49-69

Montgomery and West  
Point Railroad, Rous-  
seau's Raid on .....7-48

Montgomery Confederate  
Prison .....190-191

Moore, Col. Sydenham .....119

Moss, Henry J. Y. ....305

Mount Sterling,  
History of .....297-368

—P—

Parker, Thos. S. ....305

Parmentier, Col. Nicholas  
Simon .....228

Partin, Robert .....49-69

Pelham, Maor John .....119

Perdue, Julia A. ....294-296

Phelps, Dawson A. ....203-226

Political Parties and Pro-  
paganda, Presidential  
Election 1860 .....120-135

Presidential  
Election 1860 .....120-135

Price, John .....305

Prince, Sydney  
Trotter .....361



Prine, Thomas Mc-  
Carroll, Jr. ....362

—R—

Rea, Robert R. ....287-293

Reid, Reuben .....305

Rogers, William  
Warren .....280-286

Rousseau, Lovell H.,  
Sketch of .....7

Rousseau's Raid on the  
Montgomery and  
West Point Railroad .....7-48

Ruffin Dragoons .....313

—S—

Scott, Joe T. ....99-113

Shorter, Gov. John Gill.....72

Smith, Silas H. ....306

Spinks, Winsor .....304

State Capitol in  
Montgomery .....242-245

Summers, Capt.  
Leonard F. ....119

—T—

Taylor, George Washington.....364

Treasury Note  
Change Bills .....83-98

Troy, Daniel S. ....191

Turner, B. L. ....312

—W—

Watts, Gov. Thomas Hill .....79

Webb, Col. James D. ....119

West Florida .....287

What the Bugles Say .....115-116

Whig Cuban Policy,  
1849-1851,  
Alabama Opinion .....262-279

Whiggery in Alabama .....246-253

Whigs of Alabama, A  
Great Day for the .....254-261

White Basis System and  
the Decline of Alabama  
Whiggery .....246-253

Whitehead, Col. James M.,  
Agrarian Editor of  
the Deep South .....280-286

Williams, Benjamin B. ....114-119

Woodruff, Capt.  
Louis T. ....149

Wooten, Hardy Vickers.....254-261

